Commentary

Volume Seventy-four, Number Five, November 1982

Is the Jewish Community Split?

Earl Raab

The Mandarin and the Commissar
Leopold Tyrmand

Evolution and Its Discontents
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Culture Among the Nations
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The Worm in the Big Apple
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Appropriating the Holocaust
Henryk Grynberg

MUSIC: Shostakovich in Four Parts
Samuel Lipman

BOOKS:
Arch Puddington/
Roger Starr/Naomi Munson/
David L. Kirp/Ronald Berman

EXCHANGE: Thinking About Nuclear War
Edward N. Luttwak and Critics

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE/$2.75

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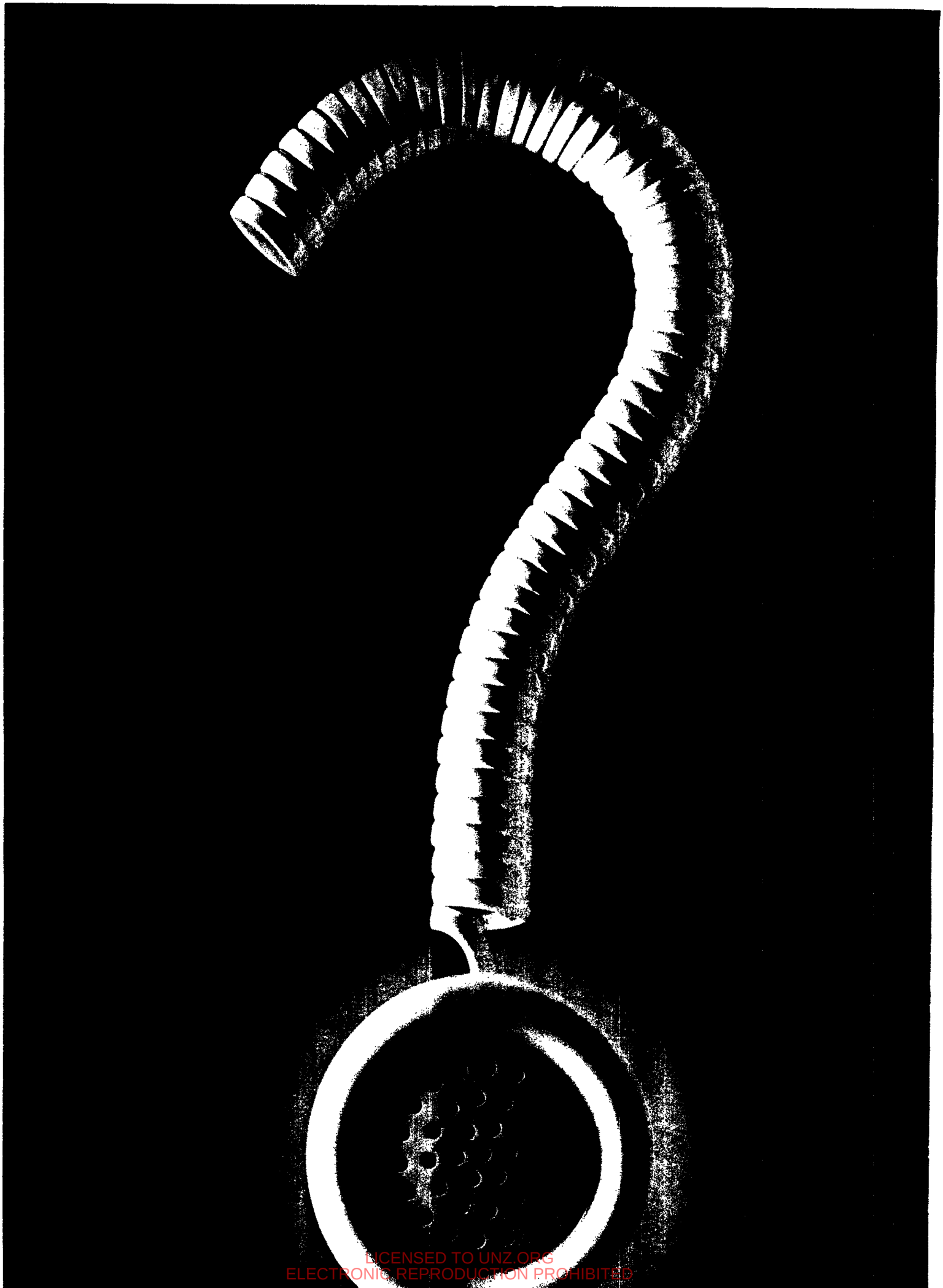

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Where is the Bell System going?

Nothing has done so much to change the world we live in as the telephone.

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So now America and the Bell System can change old goals for new ones.

The regulators and legislators of this country are looking more to the marketplace and competition–rather than regulation–to decide who will provide competitive services and equipment and how they will be priced.

The biggest force behind this change has been new technology which has changed the very nature of telecommunications.

We are on the threshold of a new era. The Information Age. The technology of communications has gradually merged with that of computers. And the marriage of these two technologies offers the potential for an impressive array of new customer services.

However, the blending of these two technologies has also blurred the boundaries between a traditionally regulated business–communications–and the unregulated data-processing industry.

This circumstance has led to some major rethinking of public policies on telecommunications.

Policies to which the Bell System must conform.

And in order to conform, the Bell System must change.

To begin with, the Bell telephone companies will have to be separated from their parent company, AT&T. Among other things, these local operating companies will continue to provide basic local service under state regulation, and they'll serve as the gateway to the new Information Age.

Because it is being thrust into a marketplace that is intensely competitive, AT&T–the parent company–is also going to change. The task of bringing these changes about is an enormous one. But we are determined to make the transition a smooth one.

AT&T will continue to create and provide new products and services to meet your changing needs. And Western Electric, Bell Labs and Long Lines will continue to remain vital parts of AT&T.

We want to keep our customers, shareowners and employees informed every step of the way. So along with your local Bell telephone company, we'll be talking with you in ads like this about varying aspects of the coming changes.

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One of the most difficult challenges facing American business has been to find a way to sell to the Japanese. We think we have a solution.

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Instead of just talking about building quality products, years ago we committed our entire company to doing it. And in living up to that commitment we've proven that with the right approach American manufacturers can meet the Japanese on their own home grounds.

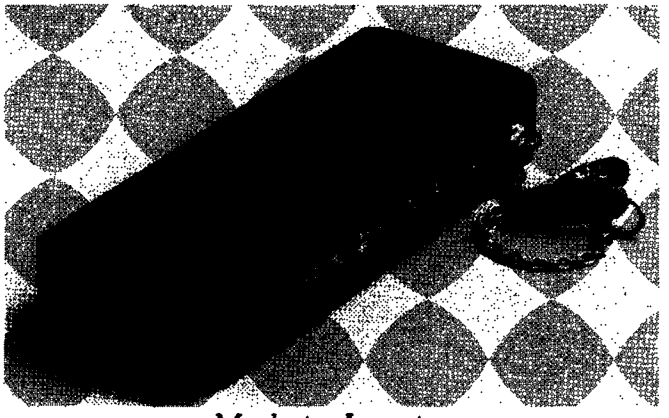
A big key to success is having a strong enough commitment to get through the tough initial stages. We learned this in 1978 when, with the encouragement of the U.S. government, Motorola decided to compete for some of the electronics business traditionally awarded only to Japanese companies by Japan's giant Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation.

It was a bold undertaking that required substantial investments of time and money. In fact, just to enter the competition it was necessary to complete an exhaustive survey of competitive products and to translate and study all the pertinent Japanese specifications.

But if you want to sell to the Japanese you have to make the effort. So we did it.

Then we did something even tougher. We committed ourselves to exceeding the quality standards they set for us.

And succeeded. In early 1982, after competing with a number of Japanese electronics manufacturers, Motorola demonstrated in rigorous testing that our pagers exceeded NTT's reliability standards, while complying with their strictest price and delivery requirements.



Made in America.

As a result, Motorola was officially qualified by NTT as a supplier of pocket pagers. The first and only non-Japanese firm ever admitted to this heretofore closed group.

Orders for over 50,000 Motorola pocket pagers are expected this year alone.

In striving to exceed quality and reliability standards, though, it is equally important to maintain high standards of customer service.

We are convinced that this success in the Japanese market is due largely to the way we approach every one we serve.

It's a simple common sense way of doing business that says we pay as much attention to the wants and needs of our customers as we do to the quality of the products we make for them.

We think there's one other basic factor that's also responsible for Motorola's success in selling to the Japanese. Our participative management attitude.

One of our goals is to make every Motorola employee in every Motorola plant an effective part of the management team of our company. And because employees are motivated by this chance to participate and are rewarded for their efforts, we've found we're able to bring to bear on every product we make the enthusiasm, the dedication, and the attention to detail that result in the highest kind of quality.

The kind of quality that has allowed an electronics company like Motorola to sell in a country where they make some fine electronics themselves.

MOTOROLA A World Leader in Electronics

Quality and productivity through employee participation in management.

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Commentary

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Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.75, $27 a year; 3 years $72; 5 years $108—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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Publication Number ISSN 0010-2601
EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

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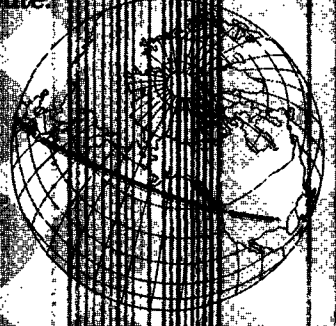

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Letters from Readers

Thinking About Nuclear War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In telling us "How to Think About Nuclear War" [August], Edward N. Luttwak attacks those who support the nuclear freeze because they regard nuclear deterrence as dangerous, immoral, irrational, and/or unnecessary. Mr. Luttwak is, I think, mounting a preemptive strike against a force of straw men.

The majority of freeze supporters, certainly including those in Congress, accept nuclear deterrence as the least evil of the alternatives available in the real world. The freeze is gaining momentum in Congress because an increasing number of Congressmen recognize that the administration's emphasis on real first-strike weapons under a veneer of phony arms control is progressively increasing the probability of nuclear war by undermining deterrence. We support the freeze precisely because it is one of the best ways to maintain and increase nuclear deterrence.

The freeze can legitimately be opposed on the grounds that it permits the Soviets to continue with non-nuclear antisubmarine and antiaircraft weapons, which could possibly assist them in a first strike. Against this is the fact that, by preventing the Soviets from testing their offensive ballistic missiles, the freeze denies them the high confidence in weapon reliability they must have for a first strike. To me, the second factor is by far the more powerful. Others may disagree, but it is on this point, not Mr. Luttwak's straw men, that the freeze should be disputed.

[Congressman] THOMAS J. DOWNEY
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak begins his analysis with a misstatement: the NATO front, he asserts, does not divide any nation. Of course it does. It divides the German nation.

Obviously Mr. Luttwak is just forgetful in this introductory assertion. He explains later that West Germany's demands for security resulting from its location constitute the main reason "defense in depth" is not a live option politically.

Indeed, the location, history, and political division of the Germans account for several West European defense problems that puzzle and vex Mr. Luttwak. To take one: a key reason "our richer allies in Western Europe fail to remedy the [conventional force] imbalance" is that the "truly huge" effort must entail a gigantic build-up of what already is the biggest army in Western Europe—that of West Germany. Many Europeans with a sense of 20th-century history recoil at the thought. To take another example: the strategy Mr. Luttwak euphemistically calls the "preclusive method of protection" would mean initiating attacks from West German soil by Bundeswehr units upon targets in East Germany. A Bonn government devoted to protecting the interests of the nation might shrink from carrying out that idea.

The "sound strategy" for Western European defense which Mr. Luttwak recommends cannot neglect the politics of German division and still be judged sound.

R. G. LIVINGSTON
Georgetown University
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In discussing the possible use of nuclear weapons in any conflict in Europe, Edward N. Luttwak says that "By far the most likely outcome is that a war would end very soon if any nuclear weapons, however small, were actually to be detonated by any side on any target. The shock effect upon leaders on both sides—but especially on the Soviet leaders who had started the war—would most likely arrest the conflict there and then."

This is very comforting news indeed. I had always believed that the Soviet leaders are less prone to shock than are our own. Are these Russians who would back down so quickly from a war they had initiated the same men we usually meet in the pages of COMMENTARY who are implacably plotting world domination and who are ready to impose any cost on the peoples of the world, including their own? If I read Mr. Luttwak correctly, the Soviet oligarchs would be driven into nervous prostration even if the nuclear weapons which detonate are their own. What has become of the men depicted by Richard Pipes in the July 1977 COMMENTARY article entitled "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a

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Looking Back at Watergate

Ten years ago, strange phrases began creeping into our national vocabulary: stonewalling, deep six, limited hangout, the Big Enchilada. These phrases and others, like expletive deleted and smoking gun, came to be covered by the umbrella term of Watergate.

We look at Watergate now that ten years have passed partly because we believe with Aeschylus that time teaches many lessons, and partly because we recall Santayana's dictum that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Yet Santayana was only half right. Remembering what happened is not enough. We also need to know *why*.

In this tenth anniversary year of Watergate many people remember that the system worked the way the founding fathers intended. But we knew that at the time. Indeed, right after one president resigned, the new president announced: "Our long national nightmare is over. Our Constitution works."

Yes, it worked. But why?

Certainly the courts, the congressional committees, and the special prosecutor were important. But none of them would have been effective if they were not supported by the people.

When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of turning over Oval Office tape recordings, the President was forced to comply because the people demanded it. Another president, Andrew Jackson, successfully ignored a Supreme Court decision against his plan to move American Indians west of the Mississippi. "Justice Marshall made his decision," Jackson thundered. "Now let him enforce it." Jackson succeeded because he had public backing. During Watergate the people backed the courts.

The people supported gavel-to-gavel TV coverage of the Senate Watergate hearings because of their desire to know for themselves what happened. Support was so great that the hearings received better ratings than the soap operas they pushed off the air.

The House impeachment committee announced it would not go to court to enforce its subpoena of Watergate tapes. The subpoena could have been ignored. It wasn't because the people supported the committee.

When the Watergate special prosecutor was fired and his office abolished, it was public protest that forced the office to be reopened and a new special prosecutor appointed. The new prosecutor had no statutory tenure. He could have been fired as well. He wasn't because the people would not have stood for it.

Had the people viewed the actions of the courts, Congress, or the special prosecutor as unfair or unwise, the President could have ignored those actions. The people would have supported him. The people judged otherwise and the system worked.

A decade's passage of time has prompted many to write where-are-they-now stories about those who took part in the Watergate drama. But Watergate a decade later is not about them. It's about all of us as Americans. And what we learn from Watergate tells us more about ourselves than about our system. Watergate teaches us that only an informed, interested citizenry can ensure that the system works. It's a lesson we never can learn too well.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

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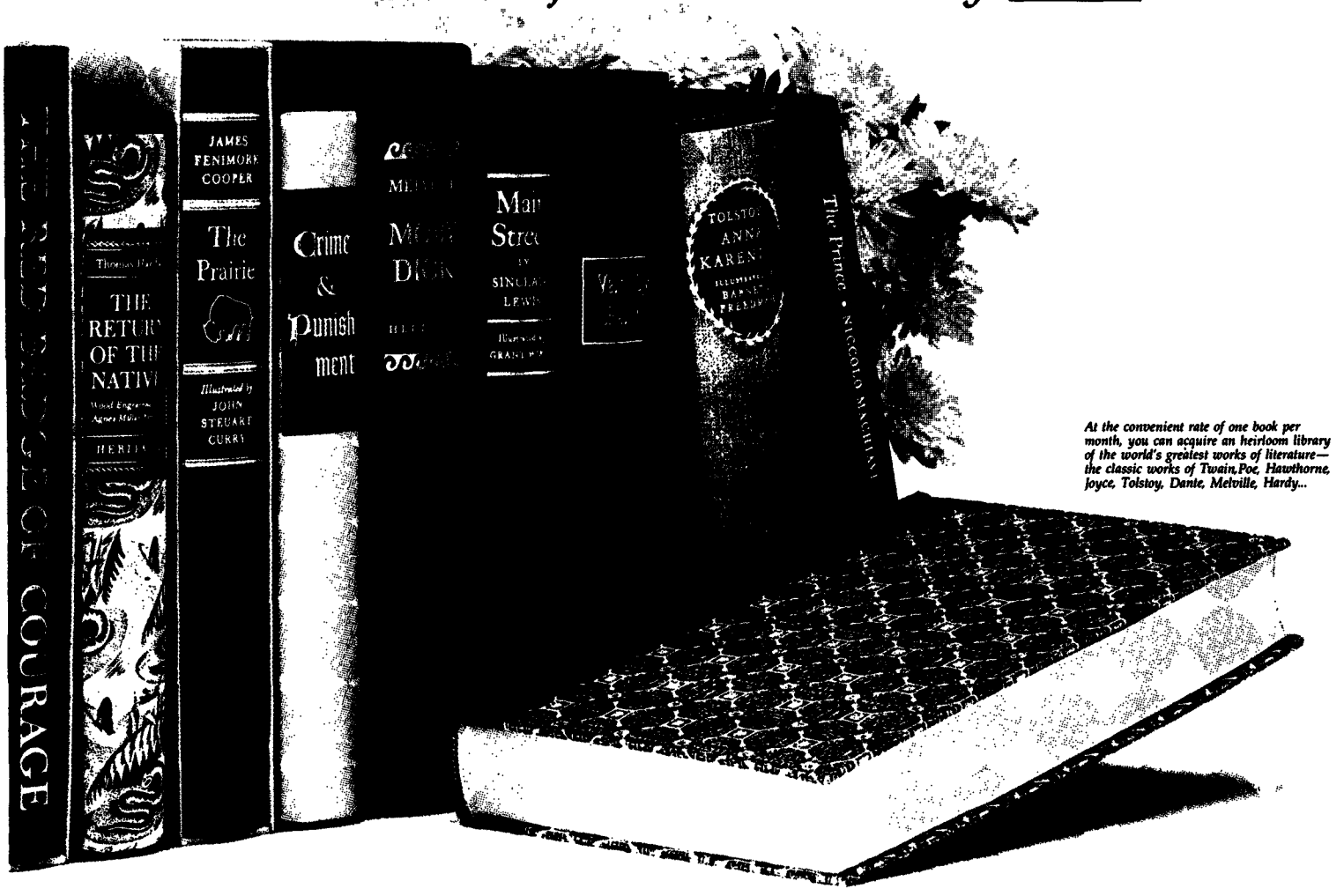

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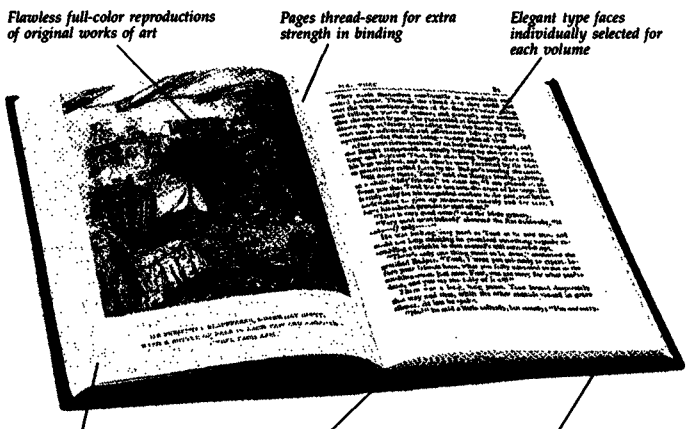
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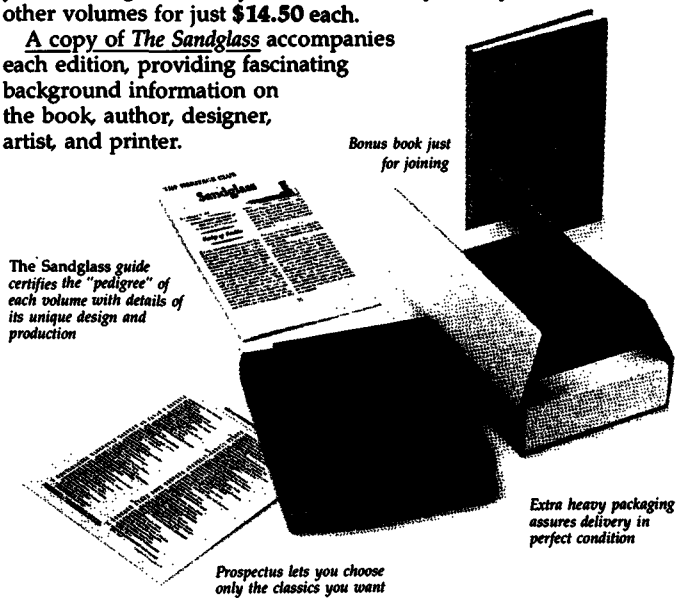
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Nuclear War"? Have they been replaced by Slavic equivalents of George McGovern and Jimmy Carter? If so, we can all relax a bit and stop worrying quite so much about the "present danger."

MELVIN SHEFFTZ
State University of New York
Binghamton, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am astonished by Edward N. Luttwak's claim that ". . . if any nuclear weapons, however small," were used, "the devastating psychological impact upon the forces in the field would most likely arrest the conflict there and then," because military units which "merely hear" of nuclear-weapon detonations "would swiftly disintegrate."...

Where is Mr. Luttwak's substantiation for this novel and sweeping assertion? Has he conducted any surveys to ask soldiers their attitudes on nuclear weapons? Any psychological research? Conventional weaponry can produce physical damage fully as horrible and painful as nuclear weapons. Throughout human history, soldiers have maintained their discipline as they marched into great danger, even certain death—e.g., the British at the Somme in 1916—in direct violation of the instinct for self-preservation. . . . I find it downright fantastic that Soviet units, with their ruthless discipline, would "almost certainly fall apart" at the mere rumor of nuclear weapons....

However, I do agree with Mr. Luttwak that the use of any sort of tactical nuclear weaponry would not inexorably lock both sides into an inescapable escalatory ladder which could lead only to an all-out strategic nuclear exchange. The leadership on both sides would realize the implications of such actions. They would not lose their rationality to an action-reaction response system that would produce mutual national suicide. . . .

There are serious reasons why NATO's tactical nuclear weapons would not be effective against advancing Soviet units: the Soviet tactic of dispersing to make poor targets, then concentrating only to attack; the difficulties with reconnaissance communications and intelligence; the time lag between finding a lucrative target for a nuclear weapon and the delivery of the warhead; the fact that our tactical nuclear capabilities would be prime targets for Soviet emasculation strikes. The plan for using tactical units set forth in FM 101-31, the U.S. Army's doctrinal statement on tactical nuclear weapons, i.e., launching our tactical nuclear weapons in clusters of 150 or so to saturate probable avenues of Soviet advance, would inflict terrible damage upon civilian lives and property, and destroy the people and nations it is supposed to be our purpose to save, and probably wouldn't be very effective in stopping Soviet units if they were dispersed at the time of detonation. The difficulties with using tactical nuclear weapons against advancing Soviet units under chaotic battlefield conditions would exist for both neutron weapons and standard tactical nuclear weapons. Soviet use of tactical nuclear weapons against stationary NATO targets, such as ports, airfields, and railroad junctions, would be much easier to effect, and more successful. The escalatory scenarios suppose a symmetry of targets and effects that would not actually exist.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Edward N. Luttwak believes his own argument, the Soviets should be elated by his statement that in a European conflict the best defense, in the face of an offensive threat, is to have either (a) a capability to attack first, or (b) considerable geographical space for an in-depth defense. It seems the Soviets have both. Mr. Luttwak tells us that since Western Europe really doesn't have geographical space it is necessary for NATO to develop a first-strike capability, or, in fact, to deploy tactical nuclear weapons. However, nowhere does he come out and say that once in possession of a preemptive strike force, NATO would automatically invade Russia unprovoked. Yet when the Soviets are prudent enough to possess the ideal defense we immediately attribute aggressive intentions to them.

I think that what the uninformed and irrational public is saying is that it is suspicious of the circuitous logic of our defense consultants and would prefer that the country's priorities and economy were based on issues other than fear.

HARRY MAYOH
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "How to Think About Nuclear War," Edward N. Luttwak goes on at length about how the USSR could invade Western Europe, but he says nothing about why it should want to, except for "some hope of gain," or "the desperate last act of a crumbling empire." Exactly what type of gain does he mean? Certainly the disadvantages of such a move are obvious: the disruption of trade with the West (would even Argentina continue to sell grain under those circumstances?) and the economic and military strain of subduing and occupying yet other hostile territories.

One could argue that the Soviet leaders might see no farther than joyriding back to Moscow in stolen Mercedeses, or momentarily distracting their populace from the dismal domestic economic scene—but to suggest that their grip on reality is that tenuous is to fly in the face of Mr. Luttwak's argument that the Soviets are too sensible to respond tit for tat to a NATO nuclear move, lest they risk escalation to a worldwide holocaust. They might have no intention of invading, but merely wish to threaten to do so, in hopes of winning "eager concessions"—but, of course, if their bluff were called, they would be faced with the tactical disadvantage of attacking a prepared enemy or the humiliation of having to back down.

Thus, I submit that Mr. Luttwak's thesis is not yet complete. Until he adds a cogent motive for a Soviet invasion, it is possible to contend that either the Soviets are too sensible to attack—in which case nuclear weapons are unnecessary—or they are too deranged to comprehend the folly of attacking—in which case nuclear weapons are too dangerous.

JOHN HEINEGG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak's demagogic denial of any opinion contrary to his own in defense of his nuclear-arms position exposes the shallowness of his argument. Amazingly, he bases the success of his one-sided logic upon the almost fervent belief that nuclear war would be limited to the firing of small-yield nuclear artillery shells. He then claims, with the assurance that must be provided providentially to those with a "tactician's mantle," that politicians, generals, and soldiers will uniformly recoil from the effects of the shock of "limited" nuclear warfare to declare the equivalent of a gentleman's agree-

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ment and put a halt to the conflict, thus stopping a generalized nuclear conflagration. What then does he propose if this very nice and reasoned response is not forthcoming or instead if an angry reaction is elicited with progressively higher-yield nuclear arms? How do the learned tacticians deal with that reaction? Are they satisfied with the results of survival at any expense? . . .

DAVID M. BROWN, M.D.
University of Minnesota
Medical School
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak refers to "that part-time physicist and full-time arms-control promoter, Hans Bethe—who has for so long used his Nobel Prize to demand authority on things very much larger than the very small particles which he has investigated." Such a personal attack is despicable. . . .

Is a person to be restricted in his intellectual pursuits because his scholarship has been widely recognized? It is impossible for me to imagine that Hans Bethe would use anything but objective analysis to achieve authority. Mr. Luttwak also reveals, in his snideness, an ignorance of the broad nature of Hans Bethe's scientific work.

IRWIN TESSMAN
Department of Biological Sciences
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward N. Luttwak contends that the Soviets are fully capable of invading and conquering Western Europe. But in supporting that contention he uses considerable selectivity in marshaling his facts.

First, he neglects to mention that there are well-known corridors of likely Soviet advance, and he seems to imply that enemy forces could mass at the entrance of those corridors and launch what amounts to a surprise attack. However, General Alexander Haig, when he was commander of NATO, indicated that the West would have a likely warning time of one or two weeks—plenty of time to meet an attack.

Furthermore, Mr. Luttwak disregards the impact that minefields sown in the path of advancing tank columns would have on the enemy's advance. Nor does he note NATO offensive capability which would involve conventional attacks on Warsaw Pact follow-on forces.

His introduction of misleading weapons counts—the nearly two-to-one Soviet advantage in tanks—ignores NATO's helicopter-launched antitank missiles and discounts the effectiveness of hundreds of thousands of ground-launched antitank missiles. And his deceptive use of division counts must be noted as well. Soviet divisions average 11,000 soldiers; U.S. divisions about 18,300. All other NATO divisions, moreover, are larger than Warsaw Pact divisions.

While he does mention the unreliability of Polish, Czech, and other East European forces, he seems to understate that factor. Many military authorities believe that Soviet divisions are in Eastern Europe not to project power into Western Europe but to insure control over the restive Eastern European states, whose military forces would be a liability to Moscow rather than an asset. And would the Soviets want to stake the security of their lines of communication across hostile East European territory?

His final omission is any reference to the dictum of Clausewitz that "the defense is the stronger form of making war." Or, as General Bernard Rogers, current NATO commander, puts it: "As a defensive alliance, we do not need to match the Warsaw Pact in forces or equipment." Perhaps General James Maloney, director of weapons systems for the U.S. Army, says it best: "You need a ratio of perhaps 4 or 5 to 1 in force ratio to attack." Yet nowhere does Mr. Luttwak credit the Soviets or the Warsaw Pact forces with such a ratio. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to conceive of the Soviets invading and conquering Western Europe.

GEORGE OTT
Corvallis, Oregon

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I question Edward N. Luttwak's suggestion that Europe could not respond satisfactorily to a conventional attack by the Soviet Union because, first, it is unprepared for offensive warfare and, second, such a diffuse group of nations would not be able to mount an attack in time. Mr. Luttwak thus sees no solution other than continued reliance on an American nuclear umbrella.

This seems incredibly shortsighted and typical of our inability to put the nuclear threat in its true perspective. Wake up, Mr. Luttwak, we are facing a situation that requires, at least, some creative solutions and, at best, truly heroic measures. Is it not possible that with the advent of a bilateral nuclear freeze and eventual nuclear disarmament, Europe, faced by the threat of a Soviet takeover, would find a means to overcome its national differences and its unwillingness to develop an offensive capacity? And if one gave the West Germans a choice between conventional warfare on their own land and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust, would they truly choose the latter?

I am well aware of the threat posed by the Soviet Union to all of the free world. I support a strong defense, but I also support the nuclear-freeze movement. I fear that if my fellow anti-Communist conservatives do not see the possibility of supporting both positions, the nuclear-freeze movement will appear to be dominated by the usual Russian apologists and will lose all credibility.

ARLENE STARK
Mill Valley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although I agree substantially with the ideas expressed by Edward N. Luttwak, I initially questioned his assertion that proponents of a nuclear freeze ignore the "elementary calculus of good and evil." I reacted this way because so many ethically sensitive people with whom I am acquainted were working vigorously for passage of Wisconsin's nuclear-freeze referendum on September 14, which in fact passed overwhelmingly.

However, in rereading Mr. Luttwak's COMMENTARY article, "After Afghanistan, What?" [April 1980], I noticed a distinction he made, pertinent to the nuclear debate, between those who "insist that totalitarianism itself must be resisted" and those who want only to resist "such . . . episodic manifestations" as the trials of dissidents.

It is clear from reading nuclear-freeze campaign literature that freeze proponents have capitalized on the inclination to resist only the "episodic manifestations" of Soviet behavior. In fact, such literature goes further by insisting that, where issues of war and peace are concerned, the United States and the Soviet Union are essentially similar. Freeze proponents argue that ". . . both sides have been guilty of foreign intervention. . . ." Specifically, U.S. intervention in Cambodia

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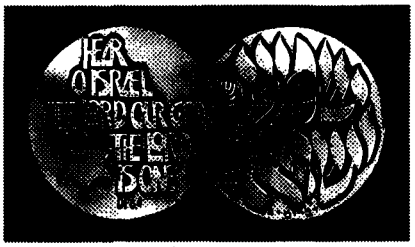

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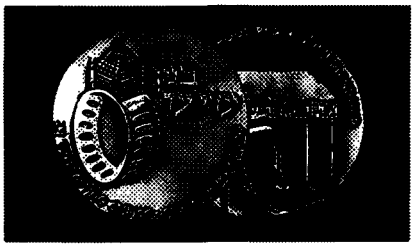

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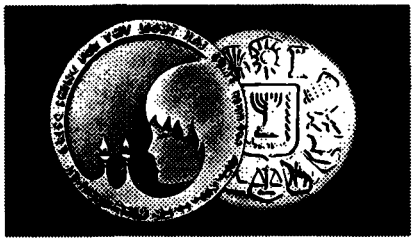

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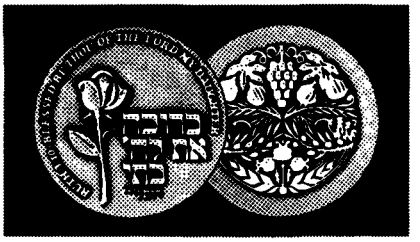

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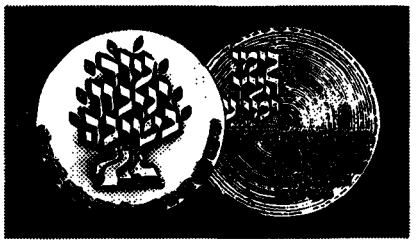

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and Vietnam (despite Pol Pot, the boat people, etc.) is viewed as equivalent to, if not worse than, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. . . .

Finally, a major justification for the freeze, according to its supporters, is to prevent a move toward nuclear war-fighting strategies on both sides. This ignores, of course, the contrast between the Soviet Union's long-established nuclear war-fighting doctrine and fully operational SS-18 missiles and America's lack of such a doctrine and yet-to-be deployed MX missile. . . .

The two related goals of the Soviet Union are, in Mr. Luttwak's words, "the accumulation of superior military power" and "the preservation of totalitarian control." Thus, in the end, Mr. Luttwak's charges are both strategically and ethically accurate. For despite the best moral intentions of many concerned people, an accumulation of state-passed nuclear-freeze referenda will lead, eventually, to a political situation, the consequences of which (war or totalitarian domination) are far more ethically reprehensible than America's recent decision to rejoin an arms race the Soviets never quit.

LAWRENCE KOHN
Madison, Wisconsin

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK writes:

From Thomas J. Downey's letter I understand that he supports the nuclear freeze primarily because it would serve to arrest the current weapons programs of the United States (". . . the administration's emphasis on real first-strike weapons under a veneer of phony arms control is progressively increasing the probability of nuclear war by undermining deterrence"). I certainly appreciate the honesty of this admission, which should undoubtedly be more widely broadcast. Most supporters of the freeze have been deluded into thinking that the *effect* of the freeze would be symmetrical, limiting the Soviet Union as much as the United States. Congressman Downey knows better; he obviously recognizes that the Soviet Union has "raced" so well that if both sides were now to stop, the United States would be left in an inferior position, in particular with its asymmetrically vulnerable land-based ballistic missiles. The Reagan program would both diminish our vulnerabilities and begin to increase the vulnerability of Soviet forces, thus achieving a new equilibrium. That new equilibrium would unavoidably be less stable than the earlier situation in which the land-based, fixed-point missiles of both sides were less vulnerable; the unfavorable change proceeded from the deliberate Soviet deployment of very large and accurate missiles. If the happier situation of "safe" forces on both sides cannot be reestablished by deep cuts (of the sort that Eugene V. Rostow *et al.* are seeking), I for one would feel safer with land-based ballistic-missile forces symmetrically vulnerable than in a situation where only our own land-based forces are exposed to attack.

R.G. Livingston's letter suggests that I would support a strategy of preemption on the part of West Germany. I wrote no such thing; on the contrary, I specifically ruled out both a preemptive/preventive atttack strategy and also a defense-in-depth strategy, since neither would be acceptable to the Federal Republic or to NATO at large.

Melvin Shefftz should pause before taking comfort in my contention that the Soviet Union would not initiate a *nuclear* war: the Soviets have made much progress in acquiring the ability to win by non-nuclear means alone. As it is, the onus of resorting to nuclear weapons is thrust upon NATO—and if the freeze and kindred initiatives are not firmly resisted, NATO will lose its last means of offering security to Western Europe.

Joseph Forbes would agree, I think, with two minimum positions: first, that neither he nor I has any factual basis for estimating the psychological effects of nuclear war upon troops in the field; and second, that troops exposed to the full force of a new form of attack (e.g., *massed* artillery in World War I) are shocked into passivity or worse if they are "green" and have had no prior exposure to a similar form of attack (e.g., somewhat less intense barrages). And there is nothing "similar" that can prepare troops for their first exposure to nuclear weapons. With the rest of Mr. Forbes's remarks, I merely agree, although I would note that FM 101-31 no longer defines U.S. doctrine.

Harry Mayoh is right, but only at the strategic level; if one examines the operational and tactical forms of Soviet deployment in Europe, the offensive orientation of those forces is immediately obvious. If the Soviet intent were defensive, forces altogether cheaper would suffice to provide a very reliable defense against NATO's feeble offensive strength.

John Heinegg's question is valid, but the answer is implicit in his own letter: the ability to invade with (nuclear) impunity would earn the Soviet Union all that a subservient Western Europe could offer; and it is not a "bluff" that NATO would face, but a real capability. As for the evils of victory (trade disruption, occupation problems), I note that such consequences have failed to discourage aggressors in the past —all of them.

David M. Brown demands a guarantee that a nuclear war will not escalate. I cannot give any such assurance, even though I believe it reasonable to expect that the most powerful of restraints would intervene to arrest escalation. But what is Dr. Brown's alternative, to give up or to make the effort to build the best possible kind of protection through both defense and deterrence?

Re Irwin Tessman's protest, I confess to a certain ignorance of physics, but I do know something about Hans Bethe's doings over the years. If his campaigns against sundry U.S. weapons programs have absorbed less than his full-time efforts, I must stand in awe of what he has done on a mere part-time basis.

I am not happy to reply to George Ott, as I must. On General Alexander Haig's dictum: I wish it were true; comforting peacetime expectations of reliable warning are shattered in that awful moment when it is realized that once again deception, masking, and mere habituation have defeated the apparatus of warning, to yield surprise to the enemy. We would be lucky to have one or two days of clear warning; before that, all we are likely to have are ambiguous warnings more likely to precipitate a debate within the Alliance than any serious reinforcement.

On General Bernard Rogers's dictum: I wish it were true; since NATO is defensive/reactive it would need a front-wide superiority to have any chance of a decent ratio of forces at the points of contact. I do hope that General Rogers reads his Clausewitz more carefully than Mr. Ott: the defense is indeed the stronger form of war, but only at the tactical level where one is considering only one small sector of a front—*there* the defense is stronger. It is not stronger strategically, where the offense can choose its sectors of penetration.

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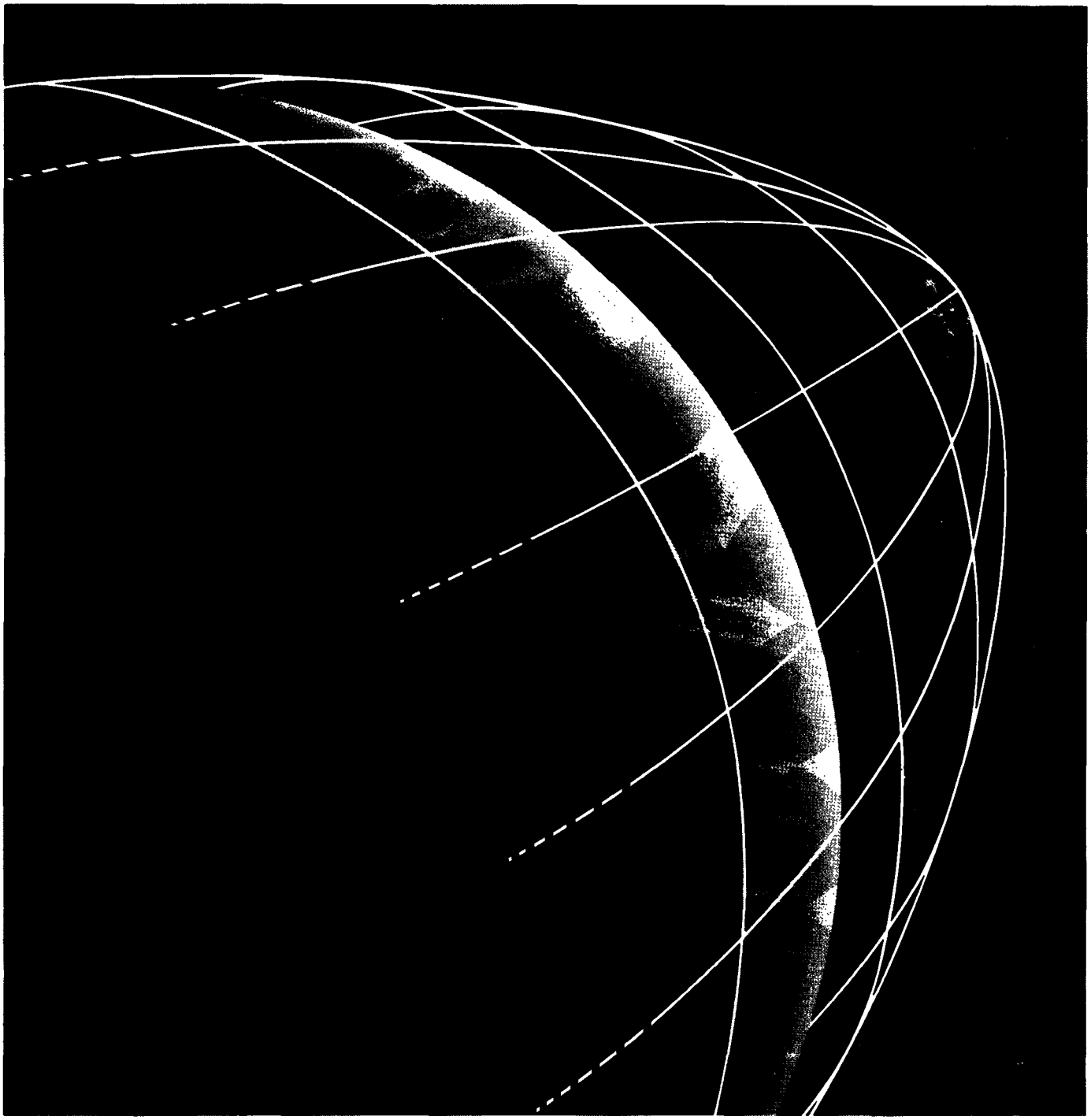

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On General James Maloney's dictum: the same as above; he surely meant the tactical level where it is indeed true that one might need two or three, or even four or five, companies to dislodge one that is entrenched. But at that same tactical level, Soviet armies could now expect force ratios of 7 or 8 in their favor, since NATO could not possibly concentrate in timely fashion by lateral movements along the front.

As for the "well-known corridors of Soviet advance," they are indeed "well-known," and a Soviet Union that has invested so greatly in cross-country mobile forces would certainly employ the resulting flexibility to avoid such "corridors." The famous minelets Mr. Ott mentions are not useless, but I note that the Soviet Union has already equipped its tank forces to defeat this particular hindrance, even while NATO has scarcely deployed the minelet system. (The tendency to compare our prototypes with Soviet equipment in mass deployment should be resisted.) I did not pretend that Soviet and Western divisions are of equal size in troop numbers; I merely noted that they are more than equal in *well-equipped* troop numbers. As for the famous Czechs and Poles: with more than 180 divisions on its books, the Soviet Union can surely spare a dozen to guard the lines of communication.

I cannot share Arlene Stark's alarm at the prospect of the nuclear-freeze movement's losing "all credibility." As for her suggestion that the West Germans would react positively to the shock treatment of denuclearization by acting promptly and on a large scale to build strong non-nuclear forces, my answer is that perhaps this would be so—but I would not want to risk Western Europe on that hope. And even if the Germans might act, others would not, and then we would find ourselves with ex-allies in lieu of NATO, since the Soviet Union would be the ideal guarantor against a Germany that has become too strong.

I appreciate Lawrence Kohn's clarification.

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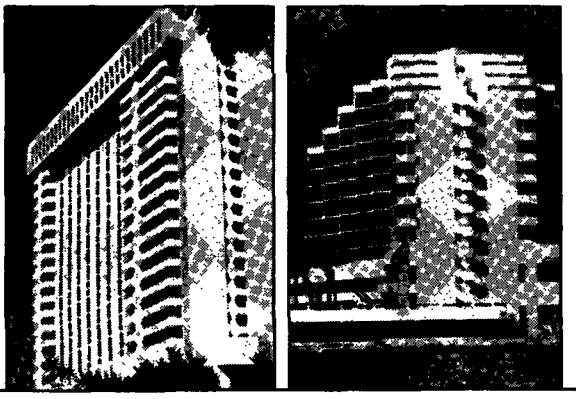

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Einstein

To the Editor of Commentary:

Sidney Hook's article on his correspondence with Albert Einstein concerning the probity of the Soviet Union ["My Running Debate with Einstein," July] is provocative not only in itself but also because of a certain reticence in Mr. Hook's presentation that might seem out of character in that formidable dialectician. He documents his frustrated efforts to impress Einstein with the delinquency of the Kremlin. He does not, however, seek to mitigate his own failure by noting that during those same fateful years the great theoretician's scientific colleagues were just as frustrated in *their* efforts to reconcile Einstein to quantum mechanics and its principle of uncertainty—in which the special theory of relativity is an essential element. Einstein could not be swayed from his conviction that "God does not play dice with the universe."

Both these poignant debates came to pass in Einstein's later years, long after his surpassing genius had conferred on his era new ordinances of natural philosophy in large degree superseding Newton's. Both debates—the one with Sidney Hook and the other, more ramified, one with the Copenhagen physicists *et al.*—were conducted by Einstein's interlocutors with deference and often affection. But Einstein was unmoved to the end of his days. That Mr. Hook eschews any *ad hominem* comment in this regard is praiseworthy. . . .

My reverence for Einstein's mind is diminished no whit by this. My long-time admiration for Sidney Hook, which dates back to the pre-war *Partisan Review* days, is likewise intact.

Maynard Kniskern
Titus, Alabama

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . I shall not make any remarks on the correspondence between Einstein and Sidney Hook, but only discuss passages in Mr. Hook's article which concern me.

Mr. Hook and I have never met. Without indicating his sources, he asserts that, while teaching at New York University's School of Commerce (from 1935 to 1942), I had been known as a "fanatical anti-anti-Communist." This is utterly false. My attitude on the Soviet Union, which was conceived even before I came to the United States

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and which has never changed, was completely different. Mr. Hook insults Einstein even more than me by asserting that "no one has been able to fathom" the reason why I became "one of Einstein's advisers." I was not one of his advisers; he considered me one of his closest friends. He seemed to have confidence in me since he appointed me the sole executor of his last will, including his vast, precious, and probably unique literary estate.

Mr. Hook seems to assume that I was the evil spirit in Einstein's non-scientific life and work. There would not have been any need for me, as Mr. Hook suspects, to "regale" Einstein with Mr. Hook's "'reactionary views,'" since Mr. Hook's views were well known in academic circles and to all who were interested in public and political affairs, as Einstein was.

OTTO NATHAN
Executor, Estate of
Albert Einstein
New York City

SIDNEY HOOK writes:

As I use the term "anti-anti-Communist" it does not necessarily imply that one is pro-Communist. It connotes a view according to which concern with Communism on a global scale as a threat to a free society is considered obsessively mistaken in relation to greater dangers, usually domestic. My reference to Otto Nathan's views was apropos of my attempt to ascertain who persuaded Einstein, after he expressed skepticism about the Moscow Trials, that they were genuine. Since Mr. Nathan did not respond to my letter of inquiry about his possible influence at the time, I concluded that we should "suspend judgment on this point."

My "'reactionary views,'" so well known in academic circles according to Mr. Nathan, were expressed in my books during this period, most relevantly in *Reason, Social Myths, and Democracy*; *Heresy, Yes—Conspiracy, No*; and *Political Power and Personal Freedom*.

Two reasons account for my writing that no one has been able to fathom why Mr. Nathan became one of Einstein's advisers. They apply just as well to the fact that he was named the sole executor of Einstein's estate.

1. During his lifetime Einstein always allowed me to reproduce his letters whenever I asked him to do so. Mr. Nathan, on the other hand, refused me permission to publish Einstein's letters to me unless I submitted the comments I proposed to make on them (letter of June 18, 1981). I rejected this crass and arrogant attempt to exercise censorship as a violation of every principle of intellectual freedom for which Einstein stood as well as the established canons of scholarship in a free world. I requested Mr. Nathan's permission to reproduce our extensive correspondence on this matter but he refused and threatened legal action if I sent copies of our correspondence to the science editors of the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post*.

2. Although Mr. Nathan was left the sole executor of Einstein's "vast, precious, and probably unique literary estate," more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since Einstein's death, yet not a single volume of this treasure has been pub-

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lished! The main reason has been Mr. Nathan's refusal on very dubious grounds to honor his agreement with the Princeton University Press. After prolonged delay and heavy legal costs to the Press, the courts recently decided in its favor and Mr. Nathan resigned as literary executor. The unsavory details of the affair have in part been discussed in an article in *Science* (July 17, 1981).

Under the circumstances I still hold to my statement that one cannot fathom why Einstein regarded Otto Nathan, if not as an adviser, then, as Mr. Nathan claims, as "one of his closest friends."

Reconstructionism

To the Editor of Commentary:

Seymour Siegel describes properly the social and intellectual circumstances which prompted Mordecai M. Kaplan to embark upon his lifelong project of "reconstructing" Judaism for the 20th century ["Mordecai M. Kaplan in Retrospect," July]. Rabbi Siegel, however, should have called attention to the important fact that Kaplan's writings produced more than a "variant stream within Conservative Judaism."

Kaplan's writings have led to the creation of a full-fledged indigenous religious movement within American Judaism which all historians of contemporary Jewry now recognize as a "fourth force" among the religious groups on the American scene. The movement is fully equipped with a Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot, a Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (with 65 graduates to its credit) established in 1968, and a Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association. The movement is affiliated with the Conference of Presidents of Major National Jewish Organizations and the American Section of the World Jewish Congress. Obviously, we are dealing here with more than a "variant stream within Conservative Judaism."

Kaplan's rejection of the "chosen-people" doctrine was by no means dictated by his desire to advance "the ideal of social harmony." If anything, it has raised a storm in the Jewish community, as Rabbi Siegel points out; but, perhaps more to the point, it has stirred passionate opposition in the Christian community as well. As some writers have indicated, Christianity relies upon the doctrine of chosenness both to teach God's "rejection" of the original Israel, and His selection of the Church to replace the Jews as His chosen. Kaplan strikes a blow at the fundamentals of both major religions based upon supernatural revelation.

Finally, one has the right to ask Rabbi Siegel how he knows that "Even the Columbia University campus, where John Dewey taught, does not want Deweyan religion; it prefers the Baal Shem Tov. . ."? Of course, there has been a resurgence of Orthodoxy; *yarmulkes* are definitely in. But one would require a more thorough investigation to establish that the whole campus wants the Baal Shem Tov. Incidentally, Rabbi Siegel does not say whether he thinks this is good for the Jews or not.

[Rabbi] Ira Eisenstein
President Emeritus
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Woodstock, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

Seymour Siegel's article, while interesting, contains a number of inaccuracies and some challengeable opinions.

Some errors of fact: the term "civil religion" was coined by Mordecai Kaplan, not Robert Bellah. Reconstructionism, while a strong influence in both the Conservative and Reform movements, has been an independent grouping at least since the 1950's, when the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot came into being.

As to opinion: Rabbi Siegel argues that Kaplan's most important idea, that Jews are rooted in peoplehood rather than religion alone, has been absorbed by the entire Jewish community, while his other ideas, especially regarding a non-personal God and rejection of the classical doctrine of chosenness, will never be popular.

While lip service may be paid universally to the idea of Jewish peoplehood, few understand fully its sweeping implications. A two-culture Judaism must be a fully democratic one. Moving the role of the rabbi from legal decisor and clergyman to resource person and facilitator has occurred in sweeping numbers only in the Reconstructionist movement, and that is a crucial step toward democratizing the synagogue, the institution which touches more Jews' lives than any other in America.

Rabbi Siegel contends that a non-personal God cannot attract the spiritually hungry Jew. Yet we know the attractive power of Eastern religions on young Jews, and they rely on non-personal God models. That our spirituality must be developed from within us without recourse to superstition is an idea we would do well to let penetrate our often intellectually and spiritually stultifying large congregations.

Lastly, taking pride in Jewish uniqueness, in Jewish history, culture, and morality, is natural and healthy. That kind of ethnocentricity, however, should not lead us to claim that we have a final lock on truth and justice. The denial that God chose us is not just a denial that God would do such a thing; it is a denial that we have finished with learning from others. That is why Kaplan was at the forefront of the fight for equality of women in the Jewish community. It is why he made space for individual conscience.

Kaplan has given us a new way to rethink our Jewish commitments. The recent growth in the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot and in the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association shows that we have only begun to capitalize on Kaplan's work. At a time when most Jews are unaffiliated, warm informal Jewish communities are badly needed. Reconstructionist groups are dedicated to open inquiry and spiritual search with a minimum of preconditions in belief or practice and a maximum opportunity for exploring Jewish tradition and contemporary dilemmas.

In his 102nd year, Mordecai Kaplan is just coming into his own.

[Rabbi] David A. Teutsch
Executive Director
Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation
New York City

Seymour Siegel writes:

I am grateful to Rabbi Ira Eisenstein and Rabbi David A. Teutsch for pointing out that Mordecai Kaplan's followers have indeed decided to form a "fourth" grouping in American religious Judaism, including the founding of a rabbinical school and the whole panoply of groups mentioned. I regret that I did not mention this in the article. However, it is true that for most of his career, Kaplan was identified with the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Conservative movement.

Rabbi Eisenstein is correct in call-

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ing attention to the fact that Jewish chosenness is a basic tenet of Christianity as well as Judaism. I did mention that fact when I wrote, "The basis of Christian faith is Jewish chosenness." It is also true that Kaplan gives social harmony as one of the reasons for his eschewing the "chosen-people" idea. It is therefore somewhat strange that a doctrine affirmed by Judaism and Christianity should be abandoned in order to insure a modicum of harmony between the two great religions.

The religious preferences of Columbia University students are, of course, hard to pinpoint. My reflections on their preference for the mysticism of the Baal Shem Tov over the rationalism of Mordecai Kaplan are based on admittedly imprecise criteria: propinquity (my office is one block from the campus); conversations with religious counsellors at the university; and numerous contacts with students. Of course, they are not *all* devotees of Hasidism. I am confident, however, that if a poll were to be taken, the founder of Hasidism would win hands down—even, I am sorry to say, over the Jewish Theological Seminary.

I am happy that Kaplan coined the term "civil religion" as well as the idea before Robert Bellah did. That only adds to his stature.

I am well aware that people do not live up to their convictions. Studies of American Jewish leaders, notably the one by Charles Liebman published in the *Amercan Jewish Yearbook* in 1970, show that an overwhelming number of American Jews have embraced the peoplehood concept in regard to Judaism.

The attraction to Eastern religious cults mentioned by Rabbi Teutsch has, in my observation, not much to do with the denial of a personal God. It has something to do with the revolt against traditional Western (bourgeois) values, the attractions of a guru, and the appeal of a warm community.

Having said all of this, as a fellow student (with Rabbis Eisenstein and Teutsch) of Mordecai Kaplan, I would be overjoyed if many of his basic teachings were to grow in acceptance as he proceeds into his second century of life.

Afghanistan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the fall of 1980, the CIA interviewed law students at the University of Michigan for positions within the Agency. The recruiters were met by about fifty demonstrators. One carried a sign which read: "Extend the Gains of the October Revolution to Afghanistan." That which amused for its idiocy in 1980 now horrifies when one finishes reading Michael Barry's "Afghanistan—Another Cambodia?" [August]. The October Revolution has swallowed that country, and Mr. Barry's article reveals just how ghastly that process has been....

There is now a full-fledged peace offensive under way in the West. There are negotiations at many levels on a great variety of subjects. There are powerful lobbies pushing nuclear-freeze referenda in California and Michigan. There are weighty statements from groups like the Catholic bishops on the immorality of nuclear weapons.... Of the West's mission, however, there is little news.

For those who focus solely on the GNP and on missile ranges, on pipelines and on IMF credits, the parochial interest is a sufficient compass. If we assure our own security, the reasoning goes, the rest of the world will mend itself in due course. Such a view has no moral anchor. It lacks even the dimmest perception that all these deliberations and policies can make no sense unless they are measured by their effect on the prisoners of Pol-e Charkhi. . . .

Attention to the West's mission has long been overlooked, but whatever its precise boundaries, it cannot exclude concern for and actions on behalf of the Afghan people. If Mr. Barry's article produces this recognition in the eyes of only a few, he deserves unique congratulations. It is not an easy thing, after all, to reverse the momentum of abdication.

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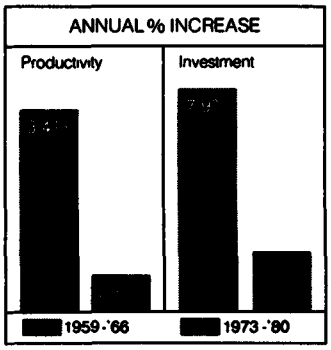

Comparing the early 60's with the late 70's, America's average annual growth in productivity was lower by 85%. Allowing for inflation, real investment growth in plants, machinery and equipment dropped by 74%.

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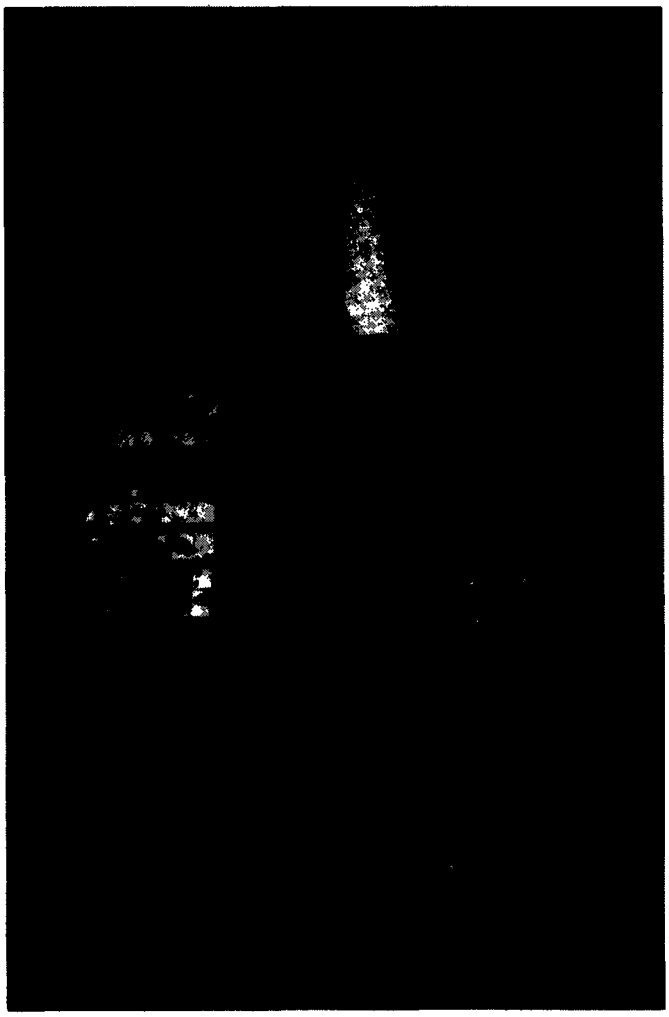

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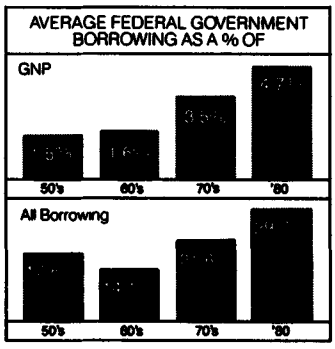

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Is the Jewish Community Split?

Earl Raab

ACCORDING to *Time* magazine in September, "Most American Jews are apprehensive, if not heartsick about the anguished debate that has broken out inside their community on the actions of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's government."

That was, and remains, the conventional journalistic wisdom about what has been happening in the American Jewish community, and some version of it could be read or heard in all the media over the last months. Yet while this conventional wisdom is right about the apprehension and the anguish, it is wrong on the nature and substance of the debate. But then much of the Jewish community itself is also misled on this point, which is one of the reasons for its apprehension and anguish.

To begin with, though many American Jews acted as though there were a great division in their community over Israel's initial thrust into Lebanon in June, no such division actually existed. Typically, a professional survey of "connected" Jews in northern California in August found that well over nine out of ten approved of Israel's incursion into Lebanon; other regional and national findings were consistent. "Connected," in this case, refers to that half of the Jewish population which has identified with some portion of the organized community. They are, in any event, the Jews who are involved in supporting Israel financially and politically; therefore if a "split" were to be of any significance, it would occur among them. It did not.

Not only was there overwhelming American Jewish approval of Israel's move into Lebanon, but four out of five Jews approved Israel's move "northward to West Beirut." An even larger proportion believed that Israel's troops should not withdraw from Lebanon until PLO and Syrian forces had withdrawn.

However, about half of the Jews who supported Israel's initial actions in Lebanon felt that *other* Jews disapproved of those actions. Indeed, the majority of these Jews felt that most Americans in general disapproved of those actions, and had become hostile to Israel as a result. Yet at that juncture in the summer, none of the four published national surveys of American public opinion indicated a high degree of general hostility on the part of the American public.

How did so many American Jews come to the conclusion that there was a discrepancy between their views and those of other Jews, and of other Americans in general?

Part of the answer is that a kind of "media halo effect" had come into play. Many people commonly and mistakenly believe that while *they* can resist the impact of the media, most other, less sophisticated, people will be overwhelmed by it. Jews were indeed anguished by the pictures and stories featured in the media coverage of the war in southern Lebanon. They were anguished for good reason: people were being killed. Just because Jews supported the need for the Israeli action does not mean they were feeling triumphalist about it; they were not. And their anguish was edged with the belief that these media images were shearing away the support of less sophisticated "others."

They were wrong. Those images, scarifying as they were, did not in themselves cause any great swing in American public opinion.

Another media phenomenon pressed on the faltering nerve of many American Jews. This was the use of the war images by sectors of the Jewish population which had always been lukewarm about or inimical to the idea of Israel. One advertisement, out of Berkeley, achieved instant national fame. Headed "Menachem Begin Does Not Speak For Us," it was signed by several hundred ostensibly Jewish names, and was thereafter referred to again and again throughout the country as evidence of a new Jewish "split." A newspaper as far away as Glasgow, Scotland, made inquiry about the ad. But there was nothing new in this particular "split," as one could tell by a goodly number of the recognizable names. Among them were some old-fashioned anti-Israel leftists, parading their disillusionment with Israel's inhumanity but not mentioning that they themselves had always cherished the dream of dismantling the Jewish state. And another contiguous tradition among Jewish intellectuals reasserted itself vigorously in this case and in the case of several other ads in the New York *Times* and elsewhere over the summer: the tradition of anti-militarism, particularly when it comes to Israel.

This is a long-standing tradition. Fifteen years

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ago, after the 1967 war in the Middle East, Robert Alter wrote in COMMENTARY:

> It is becoming increasingly clear that for a good many Jewish intellectuals Israel's victory was a profoundly unsettling experience. . . . [Such an American Jewish intellectual] must surely have felt an uneasy stirring in his preconceptions at the sight of those Israeli Mystères flashing wing upon wing across his television screen, and at the voices of the professional analysts describing the Israeli campaign as the most perfectly executed operation in modern military history. From the growing reaction in print against Israel, it is apparent that many of these intellectuals are attempting to resolve their own uneasiness by directing at least a qualified hostility toward Israel, hastening to dissociate themselves from this use of naked power by Jews.*

One such intellectual, cited by Alter in his article, was I. F. Stone. Raising high the issue of "moral schizophrenia," Stone drew a distinction between the moral Jew's "sense of mission as a Witness," and the immoral Jew's concern "only with his own tribe's welfare." As applied to Israel, the distinction was presumably between the state as the embodiment of some abstract spiritual values and the state as a flesh-and-blood polity, complete with militia. But since, to judge by the writings of Stone and other intellectual Jewish detractors of Israel, the spiritual values of Israel did not much interest them either, the issue of schizophrenia could only be seen as a dodge.

The same fringe, with some new recruits, emerged swiftly in June 1982, decrying the Israeli use of military force, and again raising the distinction between moral and immoral Jewish behavior. Waving the media war pictures, they spoke out, they signed ads, they wrote articles.

Again, they constituted a minuscule portion of the Jewish population, and by and large they did not represent any new "split." But they were taken by many flustered Jews as evidence of such a split, especially amid much informal parlor discourse about Israeli moral standards.

THIS kind of reaction among American Jews was itself not new. In a Gallup poll done for *Newsweek* in 1981, for example, Jews recorded an uneasiness over Israeli policy which was not warranted by their *own* attitudes toward that policy.

In that poll, as in a Yankelovich survey the same year, most Jews supported actions which Israel had actually taken. More than four out of five thought that the Israeli government's attitudes toward a Palestinian state on the West Bank were "reasonable"; most supported the annexation of the Golan Heights and the taking out of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. In fact, according to the Gallup survey, only one out of ten Jews said that they were less sympathetic to Israel than they had been before the Begin government had assumed office four years earlier, and over half said that they had become *more* sympathetic since Begin's advent. Yet they also expressed some uneasiness about Begin, and thus *Newsweek* headlined the poll results: "Jewish Misgivings About Begin."

One basic clue to this apparent riddle is that over half of the American Jews polled—the same American Jews who themselves approved of the specific actions the Begin government had taken—also agreed that "Begin's policies are hurting support for Israel in the Middle East." In other words, American Jews seemed to be looking over their shoulders to see what their neighbors thought, rather than abiding by their own judgments.

It is particularly notable that, in the August 1982 regional survey, over half of the general sample, and about one-third of the leadership, agreed with the proposition that "the current Israeli government is too inflexible." These were the same people who approved the basic actions of the Israeli government in Lebanon. Indeed, almost three-quarters of those who counted the Israeli government "too inflexible" specifically endorsed its moves in Lebanon up to that point.

What we see here is at least partly over-the-shoulder nervousness. Those Jews who thought that the American public had become more hostile to Israel since Lebanon were almost twice as likely as others to agree with the characterization of the Israeli government as "inflexible." And Jews who believed that Americans disapproved of Israel's action were also more likely to believe that Americans are prone to anti-Semitism.

Another set of factors was also involved. It became clear during this period that most Jews expressing uneasiness about the Begin government were uneasy not so much because of what the Israeli government had done as because of what they expected that government to do in the future.

American Jews have long been divided on the handling of the Palestinian Arab problem and the disposition of the West Bank and Gaza. In the past two years, surveys of Jewish opinion have come up repeatedly with the same configuration of opinion: about two-thirds of American Jews believe that these problems should be solved within the framework of Israel's security, rather than within the framework of historical or religious or "Greater Israel" claims. They oppose handing over the West Bank without serious security compensations; they oppose negotiations with an unreconstructed PLO; they oppose the establishment of an "independent Palestinian state" in today's circumstances—but they do think that Israel should hold on to only as much of the West Bank as it needs for security. Fewer than a third of American Jews would oppose Israeli withdrawal under any circumstances, or tend to believe that the West Bank belongs to Israel historically, religiously, and irrevocably.

The 1982 regional survey again confirmed this

* "Israel & the Intellectuals," October 1967.

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configuration. And those who recorded their belief that this issue should be dealt with more "flexibly," in a security context, were those who tended to believe that the Begin government was "too inflexible." It has long been an article of conviction among many Jews that, while the official position of Begin is that "everything is to be negotiated," he has no intention of ever giving up any portion of the West Bank. That was the source of American Jewish uneasiness about Begin *before* the Lebanese action, and it is still a main source of uneasiness. The Lebanese action stimulated that uneasiness because this war against the PLO, as it got closer to West Beirut, could be represented as a prelude to tightening Israel's hold on the West Bank.

A CERTAIN amount of looking over the shoulder at American opinion is surely reasonable. Most American Jews agree that Israel's survival depends on American support. Therefore, for the majority of American Jews, what America does and what America thinks is crucial for Israel. However, there is a standard and stubborn Jewish miscalculation about the source and nature of American opinion on Israel.

Since the creation of the state of Israel, the general American attitude toward it has been chiefly shaped by one variable: Is it good for America? There have been buttressing considerations, especially in earlier years—e.g., Israel as a refuge for Hitler's victims—but these sentiments have not in themselves determined American opinion.

The question—"Is it good for America?"—is not in itself as crass as it might sound. We know certain things about the American public. To put it bluntly, Americans are proud of their country, and to a much greater extent than the people of all other major industralized nations. In 1978, in the wake of Vietnam, Gallup found that 95 percent of American youth were willing to proclaim their national pride, while only about 60 percent of the youth on the Western European continent were willing to do so. It is critical to note that these American youths were *not* more "satisfied" than others with conditions in their country. The Americans were dissatisfied and critical, but they were not "alienated."

The aspect of America about which Americans are most proud is its political values; and of those the one they name most often is "freedom." Americans, in other words, *do* know what their country is all about, even when they are dissatisfied with its practice. If Americans regard the Soviet Union as their chief antagonist in the world, as they do, they see the antagonism operating not just in the military realm but in the realm of values. When Americans worry about their country's security, as they do, they worry about its values as well as its property.

In short, most Americans see the United States as standing for something important in the world, in addition to providing them with security and economic well-being. On all counts, they will normally support any ally deemed important to this country. But they will especially support any ally whose values are consistent with those of this country. They will treat that ally's apparent defects in the same way they treat their own country's defects: with dissatisfaction and criticism, but without ultimate alienation or withdrawal of basic support.

And that is the way American public opinion—guided by the signals it has received, by and large, from Washington, D.C.—has seen Israel ever since America became heavily involved in the Middle East: as a country not without its defects but as an important ally of the United States, and one whose values are consistent with its own.

What this means, in short, is that non-Jewish Americans are *less* unsettled than are Jewish Americans by negative images of Israel. All other things being equal, non-Jewish Americans are not put off by pictures of Israel waging war, or even of Israel ousting West Bank Palestinian Arab mayors. Indeed, even those Americans who think that Israelis are mistreating Palestinian Arabs still say they fully support Israel. The only time that public support seems to soften is when there are signals from Washington that Israel is straying as an ally. Thus, mutually hostile exchanges between President Reagan and Prime Minister Begin have had a more negative influence on American public opinion toward Israel than any pictures of destruction in Lebanon.

This is not a matter of cynicism, as Jews especially should recognize. In the Jewish tradition, a distinction is often made between the righteous man who commits good acts and the righteous man who commits evil acts, and between them both and the unrighteous man. There has never been and probably never will be a politically righteous society which does not on occasion commit evil acts, or acts which create evil effects. On the other hand, politically evil acts are mitigated through the creation and maintenance of politically righteous societies. The young Americans who say that they are proud of the United States but ashamed of many things it has done are accepting that proposition.

A politically righteous society embraces aspirations which are in accord with our best ethical standards, but, more critically (since we all know about the road to hell), it is an open society, open to history, to change, to the remedy of error, to the persuasions of the citizenry. By that definition, Israel is a politically righteous society, and so it is in the eyes of the vast majority of Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Americans do not necessarily approve of all Israeli actions, but they believe Israel to be a politically righteous society.

SO FAR as American Jews are concerned, they have a list of major "failings" which they would charge against Israel. Some of them are domestic failings, having to do with social and economic and religious arrangements within Israel itself. But more of them have to do with the

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foreign policy of the Begin government. Not that American Jews had been uncritical of the previous Labor governments and their foreign policy. Some, for instance, felt that Labor had missed a critical opportunity for peace with the Palestinian Arabs by not taking more vigorous initiatives during the post-1967 euphoria. But even before Lebanon, American Jewish criticism had accumulated mainly around the Begin government.

There were probably a variety of causes for this, including the Begin government's "religious" approach to territory and to military strength. A sizable proportion of American Jews also shrink from the tone of the Begin government in its conduct of foreign affairs. When President Reagan made his peace proposals last September, many American Jews had the same specific objections as did Begin himself—but for the most part they applauded the positive aspects of Reagan's approach, and were taken aback by what they saw as Begin's diplomatic boorishness in rejecting it out of hand. And even when the Begin government has acted in a manner of which American Jews approve, as in the peace negotiations with Egypt, there have been complaints about the Begin style and about the Begin image, which do not conform to the American Jewish idea of what an Israeli leader should be, or what impression he should make on their American neighbors.

This kind of response goes beyond looking over one's shoulder and begins to resemble something that deserves to be called a Jewish failure of nerve. Symptoms of such a failure of nerve are evident in the very fact that American Jews have exaggerated the negative reactions of other Jews and other Americans in certain times of crisis, even in the face of contrary evidence. They have insisted on interpreting dissatisfaction as alienation. And they have again and again made Chicken-Little sounds about irrevocable splits within the Jewish community. After the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981, after the first bombings of Beirut this summer, after the Begin government's reaction to President Reagan's proposals, the cry went up: "This year, there will be great resistance to fundraising for Israel . . . we are in trouble with our young people. . . ."

Another symptom is the plaintive cry in some circles for better public relations. If only—the litany goes—we and Israel could do a better job of public relations, if only we could match the petrodollar propaganda campaign, the sky would not be falling. At its most naive, this lament assumes that all dissatisfactions with Israel are problems of "image," which can be dissipated in the same way that a brand of soap is sold. But the lack of fairness with which the media tend to treat Israel is largely a function not of image but of what has been called the theory of "discontinuity," otherwise known as man-bites-dog. If Arab kills Jew, that is no surprise, no news; if Jew kills Arab, it is news. This attitude of the media is in tacit complicity with the dynamics of the Jewish failure of nerve: Israel's misdeeds are on their face more alarming than the misdeeds of others.

The Beirut massacre provided a "worst-case" test of the Jewish failure of nerve. Nobody, including those who propagandized otherwise, believed that the Israelis wanted the massacre to happen or had anything to do with it directly. But it was clear to almost everybody that Israel had made some culpable blunder, or set of blunders, and the criticism of the Begin government soon began backing up to earlier events. Some thought that the chief blunder was sending troops into West Beirut in the first place. The majority of surveyed American Jews, having approved the Lebanese invasion and the "move northward," had nevertheless been uneasy about any deep Israeli involvement in West Beirut, and opposed an "all-out attack on West Beirut." Some simply felt that West Beirut would be a trap for the Israelis, while those most hostile to Begin felt that the move into Beirut was an act of military arrogance; after the shock of the massacre there developed some strength for the revisionist theory that the entire Lebanese operation had been just such an act.

Still others felt that the inexcusable blunder was to have made an alliance with the Phalangists, although, given the choices, that was tantamount to saying that the blunder lay in *any* Israeli involvement in Lebanese politics. And there was the necessarily related blunder ascribed to the Israelis of arming the Phalangists and, at least indirectly, the murderers. As for the operational blunders themselves, these start with the matter of allowing the murderous troops into the camp without sufficient monitoring, even though Israel knew what the background was and had accepted responsibility for peacekeeping, and culminate with the Israeli government's initial attempt to stonewall an investigation.

These are the kinds of issues that history rules on finally, although political men have to provide an interim judgment. On the score of Israel's role, it made no difference that the media grandly applied the theory of discontinuity to its coverage of the situation. Massacres of Christians and Muslims by Christians and Muslims had been endemic in Lebanon, a vicious cycle consuming upward of 100,000 lives over the last seven years. The massacre in West Beirut was itself apparently connected to the earlier murder of between 1,500 and 2,000 Christians in Damur by the PLO in 1976. As with Bishop Berkeley's approach to trees falling in the forest, the media generally acted as though massacres only occurred when the Israelis were in the vicinity. Nevertheless, Israelis *were* in the vicinity, and justifiable criticism of the media does not negate justifiable criticism of Israel.

The Beirut massacre should have provided an occasion for demonstrating that sharp criticism of Israel is possible without a failure of nerve, yet

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among American Jews, the surface symptoms of just such a failure of nerve became quickly apparent. Around the land, the sky-falling cries were heard, as perhaps never before: "This time we're in real trouble with the American public. . . ." And just as quickly, these expressions of despair were amplified by television and the news magazines into evidence of a deeply fractured community.

But the basic facts which were true before the Beirut massacre and before any culpable Israeli connection to the massacre were just as true afterward. The nature of Israel as a politically righteous society had not been altered—just as the nature of the United States as a politically righteous society was not altered by My Lai or Watergate. Indeed, it is exactly in the midst of this most traumatic experience that the extent of the American public's continuing commitment to Israel can best be appreciated. A large number of Americans were highly critical of Israel's connection to the Beirut massacre. Even if they had been fully briefed by the media about the history of massacres in Lebanon, they would still have been highly critical. More than four out of five Americans, according to one Gallup survey, believed that Israel had committed *some* culpable blunder in connection with the massacre.

Nevertheless, while an overwhelming number of Americans disapproved of Israel's role in the events surrounding the massacre, there was far from a corresponding drop in support of Israel, even given the use of the massacre as a vehicle of protest. What is more, that level of support will repair itself eventually as Israel is seen again as a democratic society, and as the alliance between Israel and America is again seen as firm. The American people's commitment to Israel is not based on the image of Israel as a perfect society, but on the belief that Israel is important to America as part of a besieged association of political societies in the world which are fundamentally righteous in nature. The American commitment to Israel is not absolute, but it is probably reversible only if the belief on which it is based is reversed.

Damage can be done to that belief by a failure of nerve on the part of American Jewry, or on the part of American friends of Israel in public life. After the Beirut massacre, some national Jewish leaders and organizations in America did valiantly attempt to make the distinction between dissatisfaction with Israel and alienation from it. They proclaimed their unhappiness with the situation, they called for an investigation, *and* they declared their continued basic support of Israel. But they seemed not altogether clear on the nature of the distinction they drew or the reason for their support. Their lack of clarity was reflected in less rarefied sectors of the Jewish community, and, most distressingly, in some public officials who are close to Israel.

Senator Alan Cranston of California is as strong a supporter as Israel has had in Washington. In addition, his political background, his associations, and his temperament are very close to those of the mainstream of the American Jewish community. In a letter to Begin, Cranston complained about the Israeli government's failure to fulfill its announced mission of "protecting life in West Beirut," about the substituting of "naked military force for a balanced foreign policy," and about the manner in which Begin rejected President Reagan's proposals. In all these particulars, Cranston reflected the views of many American Jews. He also reflected their views in saying that he would continue to support the state of Israel, although he warned that others might not, under the circumstances. Then in the climax of his letter he suggested that Israel's image as a "moral beacon" had been tarnished.

But the point, again, is that as a state Israel is a "moral beacon" not because it is free of human error and wickedness but because, like the United States, it is a politically righteous society. As such a society, it must be permitted its failings without automatically forfeiting its political legitimacy.

WHETHER or not they believe that the present Israeli government is too inflexible, few Jews will disagree that there are hard negotiating stances to be taken if Israel is to survive. On a different level but on related issues, American friends of Israel will have their own hard negotiations with American policy-makers. A critical ingredient of negotiations, absent overwhelming power, is nerve, confidence, and the taking of high ground. To magnify dissatisfactions into alienation, to misrepresent the basic source of support for Israel, or to exaggerate Israel's loss of backing among the American people could turn a failure of nerve into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

We are entering a time in which the friends of Israel will have to support Israel more staunchly and in a more informed manner than ever before. To that purpose it may be necessary for the American Jewish community to open institutional channels for various bona-fide Jewish publics to debate and express their differences over and criticisms of Israel. But such debate will be effective, and will minimize abuse by the enemies of Israel, only if the failure of nerve is cured as well. Precisely because we may be entering a period of prolonged strain between Israel and America, it is more important than ever to emphasize Israel's overarching value as a free political society—not just to Jews, but to America and to the free world in general.

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The Mandarin and the Commissar

Leopold Tyrmand

I WENT to China. What I was most interested in seeing and probing was the difference between Chinese Communism and the one I knew firsthand from Eastern Europe.

My relationship to Communism is that of an innocent, moderately amused victim: I did not do anything to it (had no chance to, actually), while Communism inflicted on me every possible abomination—from keeping me muzzled, unemployed, and destitute to throwing me into jails. Thus, I should know something about it—the only question was how much of my knowledge was applicable to China. After some musing in the avenues of Peking and on the Shanghai waterfront one comes to a vague conclusion: the torments and indignities of Communism are the same there as everywhere, but the mood of the lives subjected to the Communist mayhem there is different. Why that is so is more difficult to answer in China than it is with analogous situations between the Urals and the Elbe.

On a Warsaw street, at the beginning of the 1950's, when the black sun of Stalinism scorched Poland, I ran into one of those small-time crooks who, after the Communist takeover, had routinely joined the Communist party, enchanted by the possibilities that opened up in such a seemingly paradoxical partnership. In fact, his prospects were less absurd than a Westerner might think. Since 1917, petty swindlers had correctly understood that instead of street-corner shell games, or selling bridges to hicks, or cheating naive widows, a new era of vocational con-artistry had dawned in which one had only to juggle a few slogans about the dictatorship of the proletariat or the class struggle in order to extort profits and climb the ladders of hierarchies. My Warsaw pal told me, "I landed a fantastic job. The first delegation from People's China is coming to town and I'm going to be a translator." "But," I said, "all you know is how to snatch a load of laundry from a rooftop, not Chinese. . . ."

"That's correct. But I know *what* they are going to say."

His reasoning was not altogether far-fetched. It would have applied to the uniform statements coming from Communist officialdom throughout satellite Europe. But in China, I thought, it might not necessarily be so.

The Epistemology of Smiles

IN RUSSIA, a traveler is immediately struck by the reigning surliness of the faces, which is closely related to the ubiquitous drabness of the physical surroundings. It is clear that these people are dealing with their ultimate predicament —the omnipresent materialization of an orthodox theory—with the help of a variety of tormenting resentments and pent-up hatreds. True, one may experience an occasional outburst of Russian effusiveness, which embarrasses more than it pleases. In Eastern Europe, a voyager may notice smiles on the visages of passers-by; one hears laughter in the streets, encounters fleeting courtesy, spots authentic friendliness. However, a keen observer will soon notice that Eastern European smiles are cynical at their core—much alike in Warsaw, Budapest, or Prague. They express, in addition to cordiality, something grim and rather latent. Moreover, one soon discovers that the smile, whatever its complexity, has little significance as an insight into societies, lives, realities.

It has such significance in China. There, a smile is an introduction to Communism, a cognitive challenge to the Westerner. If he works out a correct perception of that facial feature, molded by millennia, his understanding of Chinese reality expands. Once he becomes conscious of its mutations and nuances, he arms himself not only against his own naiveté, but also against gaffes of comprehension and comportment.

There is a genuineness in the Chinese smile which has nothing to do with the awful cliché of the inscrutable Oriental, though it is also independent of such Western connotations as candor, well-being, compassion, or fellowship. The smile preserves that dimension of life where formal or

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official interaction ought to be smooth yet not too personal, polite, comfortable, free of obligation, warm, and seemingly forthright, but *not* based on truth or sincerity—which may harm rather than help in complex and delicate exchanges. Civility everywhere on earth feeds on such a use of the smile, yet only in China does it acquire the function of a ritual.

It is intriguing that Chinese art seems altogether devoid of smiles. Paintings, drawings, etchings scrolls, and rubbings, populated with rulers, elderly sages, pious scholars, warriors, hauntingly lithe women, and laboring peasants rarely feature a smile—while we have it so abundantly in our own heritage, from Greek vases and medieval religious works to Renaissance, Rococo, and Impressionist art. In China, crowds in the street are somber, political leaders rarely grin for pictorial press releases, clerks in stores, banks, and offices present faces of utmost sobriety and earnestness, even peevishness. But when one sits down to business, a conference, or a working banquet, one should not be surprised when dour bureaucrats burst into giddy nonstop giggles which may last throughout the negotiations. Sometimes smiles and laughter become a sort of overkill. Only then does one get an uneasy feeling that they are meant to conceal something, most likely fear. After all, there are not just Westerners around the table. Hilarity as courtesy can go to peculiar lengths. In Shanghai I met a man who acknowledged every turn of conversation with an outburst of merriment; a simple remark that the weather was nice triggered a gale of laughter. In such a mood, Communist pieties and platitudes acquire unexpected hues and a suspicious lightness of touch.

The Propaedeutics of Untruth

MANY in the West subscribe to the commonplace that the Chinese smile is a front for a lie. It's precisely here where the smile and Communism begin their enigmatic relationship, one laden with consequences for each.

I met in China a man of liberal persuasion, an American, who had come there expecting an underdeveloped paradise but who—after a few years—lost his ideological innocence and now declared with the calm rage of one betrayed, "Here, lying to foreigners seems to be a virtue." He attributed this dismaying habit to nothing more than Chinese sociocultural tradition. Nothing more? This seemed to me rather a lot. On the other hand, as we have known for more than a half-century, lying is a certifiably established and potent factor in every Communist reality—indeed, its very foundation. It was Harry Truman who synthesized this knowledge for American use when he characterized the Soviet negotiators in Potsdam as "those ever-lying bastards. . . ."

An American who has dealt with Communists anywhere in any capacity—as diplomat, journalist, businessman, scientist, or spouse of a citizen of a Communist country—knows that everything a Communist official tells him, on or off the record, is a bald-faced, convoluted, often irrational, and maddening lie. Lying to imperialists, capitalists, bourgeois idealists, and starry-eyed democrats *is* Communist rectitude, even a sacred duty. The principle is found among Lenin's collected commandments, where the groundwork for the lore of deception, fraud, and abuse was first laid down and declared to be morality.

Where do this attitude and practice meet the time-honored Chinese sociocultural tradition? The Chinese may smile and ask: "What is a lie?" He is less sure of the answer than we who have been nourished on the Bible, Aristotle, Galileo, Descartes, Lincoln, and the London *Times*. Yet a few meetings with Chinese writers, publishers, editors, and sages can disintegrate this certitude in a peculiar way: not that we Westerners are alien to relativism, but in China it somehow dawns on us that nowhere in the history of civilizations can one find a more abstruse correlation between an untruth and a lie.

On the surface, it is the same, old, dourly cheerful, thoroughly recognizable, ritualistic Bolshevik fibbing of people who may even despise empty slogans but nonetheless have learned to coexist with them, perhaps even comfortably. But the Chinese certainly cope more satisfactorily with the ethical dimension of their necessary coexistence with untruth than does a despairing Pole, a frustrated Czech, or a stoically boorish Russian. To do this they must have an anchor, or stabilizer, somewhere in their sociocultural tradition.

At Fudan University in Shanghai, I attended an English-studies class which used TV propaganda movies for teaching the language. "After work, the students enjoy extracurricular activities," announced the narrator, and on screen there was a cut to a student choir singing patriotic songs. A derisive chuckle went through the class. "The Chinese youth's life is full of happiness," continued the voice, and a cut to a volleyball game followed, "and of sunshine," followed by a cut to a swimming pool. An unabashed guffaw rocked the classroom—a reaction unthinkable in the Soviet Union. Somehow, what that scene imposed on our perception was not a Chinese untruth but a Communist lie—apparently a different category, in which derision is acceptable. Even if only in the presence of Western visitors.

The Reality

MARCO POLO was the first to notice the plague of populousness. The European Enlightenment later idealized China, but in the 19th century voyagers came back to this primary observation: they all dwelt on that oppressive

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component of Chinese reality. One's first foray into the streets of Peking brings an awareness of the difference between this spot on earth and everywhere else. The boundless mass of stomping, breathing, pulsating humanity is interminable, occupying every corner of consciousness, emerging from everywhere, encroaching upon every unit of space, saturating every inch of being.

What 19th-century travelers saw was a human pulp, with discernible characteristics: horrifying destitution, appalling misery, rags, and humiliation but also, in close proximity, opulence and throbbing commerce, costly commodities and dazzling refinement, silk and mysterious spices, an exotic multiplicity of images, shapes, colors, contrasts. Today, the overabundance is limited merely to the number of human particles. Distinction can be made between only two qualities, austerity and poverty. Communism has put all those molecules in the same rigid paraphernalia of material existence: sturdy, drab clothes—the same fabric for everybody, available in only two colors—and bicycles. The energy and pulsation are probably much the same, but the colorful contrast is gone.

Some obscure menace looms in this uniformity and hovers over the giant cities—a ubiquitous threat of massive, immense resignation, that could turn against anybody and anything. As an inexperienced novice, I could not shake off a gnawing suspicion that there was *something* on the collective mind of this colossal agglomeration of almost-indistinguishable individuals, something smoldering under the quotidian business of mere existence, and that the something lay beyond both Communism and Western notions of good and bad, positive and negative, the beneficial and the detrimental.

This regimented poverty is tidy; shabbiness coexists with cleanliness—good news for Western preferences. On the other hand, in China an American recovers the sense that at home, poverty is to some degree optional, avoidable through hard work or the system of social welfare. This may be partly wishful thinking, but in America loud protest and concrete action against poverty are as natural as walking upright. In China, to protest penury seems a waste of time, senseless; want appears to be systemic, built into the very structure of the human condition. The misery and dreariness here are unfathomable by our standards. Although indigence does not impair personal hygiene, or the spare tidiness of living quarters, it makes the chintziest ribbon in a young girl's hair, or a blouse with a bit of color, stand out from the crowd like an almost indecent show of self-indulgence. The dusty gray big-city *hutungs*—the narrow alleys where houses present grim walls in lieu of façades—confirm that the real difference between the Chinese and us is in the respective sense of partition. We believe in fences, not walls. A fence separates but does not isolate; a wall connects *and* isolates. Whether their need is to wall off everyday sorrows or to attain that most elusive of luxuries, aloneness, is hard to decipher for a Westerner, to whom both privacy and commonality are human rights.

At a reception I sat next to an official who told me that a recent census, undertaken with the help of American computers, had produced the most precise population count in China's history. "Well," I asked, "so how many are you?" "One billion and something." "What do you mean by something?" I wanted to know. "Thirty or forty million, more or less," he insouciantly responded. An old Polish joke sprang to mind. The Sino-Soviet war breaks out, and the first Russian bulletin claims an astounding victory—2 million dead and 5 million Chinese POW's; the next day brings news of an unheard-of triumph—16 million dead and 56 million POW's; the third bulletin reads: "We surrender!"

Every morning, when the bicycles begin to roll through the streets of Chinese cities, one gets the feeling that their army needs no tanks: the Chinese could bicycle straight into Moscow, propelled by the invincible force of their casualties. The power of such a slowly moving, nonaggressive multitude, its kinetics determined more by number than by any discernible directive or emotion, seems unstoppable. Perhaps they could not vanquish, much less conquer, the world, but they could passively trample it to death. On the corner, say, of Wangfujing Dajie Street and Dong Chang 'Angie Boulevard in Peking, one comes to understand that this density may make a difference if it ever comes to spilling our own blood in some future conflict.

It is a sanitized version of reality which reaches America via press reports and expert analyses. It somehow corresponds to what Americans know about Chinese cooking from the Jade Palaces and Mandarin Temples of our suburbs: sophistication, variety, the oldest and subtlest cuisine on earth. Actually, the alimenary smells that waft through the subtropical cities of China are unknown around Manhattan's Canal Street: under cloudy skies that saturate the air with an oppressive dampness, the odors make breathing difficult. This unbearableness of existence, in which even the right to respiration becomes an issue, turns the act of reporting on Chinese political cruelties into something rather tactless. One feels a deep compassion for this people, the unique sweetness of their resignation, their helplessness obscured by industriousness, their ability to find joy, perhaps even happiness, in the minimal—a little better meal, clean clothes, a baby's wobbling walk. Communism took monumental advantage of this timeless national trait.

What Marco Polo saw in Cathay was a wealthy civilization thriving on diligence and ingenuity and dazzling in its difference from his own. He also noticed abysmal social contrasts, though they seemed to him rooted in natural causes. Today, we still can

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observe what remains of that past in the fabric of life; the attempts to create a new civilization fully independent of the past seem to have failed. What certainly continue are those dire social contrasts: the only difference is where they are rooted. In Marco Polo's time, the mandarins lived infinitely better—in terms of social influence and material luxury—than their Italian counterparts. The present mandarins, if we can still use this denomination, envy the poorest Sicilian farm hand his material equipment, down to the quality of his clothes. As for those who have reached the peak of influence and prosperity, the mandarins of Marxism-Leninism, they are invisible behind the curtains of their limousines.

John Hersey, who recently revisited Tientsin, his birthplace, reported in the *New Yorker* that the pre-Mao wretchedness is gone, replaced by very cheap yet clean shirts on everybody's back. That is true, but we are dealing here with over three decades of economic history; we just do not know what shirts might have covered the backs of the mainland Chinese had China gone the route of Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia. Hersey also states that the sore-covered beggars who were once a symbol of China's moral and social degradation have disappeared. That is not true. I had the dubious pleasure of seeing one, a perfect one, festering wounds and all, right on the Nanking Road in Shanghai, strategically located in front of an exclusive department store for overseas Chinese. A flawless comment on the indomitable *plus ça change* law of history.

Docility, Wisdom, and Old Age

THE preoccupation with childhood and old age is, perhaps, one of the most enduring traits of Chinese civilization. Indeed, "old age" sounds awkward here; the French *vieillesse* expresses better the warm, perhaps often unsubstantiated, awe for those in the advanced stage of life. Age almost automatically presumes wisdom—a supreme value, reflected in every aspect of the endemic culture. My birthday occurred during my visit. The news of the event galvanized my Chinese entourage. "You must be very happy, it's a felicitous day for you," people thirty years younger kept repeating throughout the day; they seemed unaware of the melancholy in the pasage of time.

China is an old-timers' paradise, surprisingly touching and grotesque at once. I saw on a Hangchow street an unmistakable swinger by Chinese standards—white nylon shirt, synthetic two-piece suit, black, pointed slip-ons, long hair early 1960's style—lugging on his back an old, unsightly, slobbering woman, a grandmother or relative, who certainly had ruined his date or dance, but whom he felt obligated to transport and comfort. His dedication would be inconceivable in Chicago, but is well within the circle of those traditional veneration of which China seems the last bastion on earth. If this accounts for the surprisingly youthful look of octogenarians, more power to them.

On the other end of the scale are the children—obviously better clad than the rest of society, surrounded by attention and tenderness. And they deserve it: Chinese toddlers never scream in public, seem to know nothing of temper tantrums, present to the world a mental balance long forgotten in the West. The only child I heard producing an obnoxious sound was one with Chinese-American parentage. The native Chinese appear to have a subliminal sense that in a monstrously overcrowded society, one dare not get on other people's nerves too intensely without risking unpredictable consequences.

Which is, perhaps, their first introduction to the practice of timeless Chinese wisdom.

Where can its source be sought? It is fatuous for anyone in the West to claim to know the answer, but one of its rudiments must be the sense of hierarchy, so different from the Western—an accepted element of existence in which the notion of someone else's authority blends harmoniously with the satisfactions and obligations of being. Our own wisdom begins with Adam's and Prometheus's dissatisfaction with hierarchy and authority—the rest has been an uphill struggle to divest both these elements of their role in life, allegedly for the better. This everlasting struggle has shaped our sense of the divine, human will, and freedom and humor, given us Sophocles, St. Augustine, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Kafka, and Oscar Wilde—presences who would be unthinkable as outgrowths of Chinese wisdom.

By contrast, the Chinese sense of hierarchy seems to have its roots in respect for intellectual virtues, a *kind* of respect unrecognizable by Western lights, for in China those virtues are associated with real, earthly authority and power. Our sages were perennially wedded to holiness and impracticality, and their power was not of this world. This was as true of the ancient Jews and Greeks as it was throughout Christendom's sway. Only recently has the Western wise man assumed cultural power, and he now translates it into political power—which may bode ill for us.

IF THE intellectual virtues are at the core of Chinese wisdom, it seems that the Communists took full advantage of this by enforcing the acceptance of Marxism as the supreme sagacity. When the Chinese intelligentsia massively embraced Marxism in the pre-Kuomintang era, and then Leninism in the period between Sun Yat-sen and Mao, I suspect they saw in it less a tool of justice, revenge, and rebellion against hierarchy and authority, as the West did, and more a great economic gadget to eliminate their ultimate woe—the subhuman misery of the peasant masses, the terminal indignity of famines and plagues. It looks now as if Marxism-Leninism has helped a little in China, but its economic "wis-

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dom" has since become the laughingstock of the West, and it has brought other catastrophes the unfathomability of which may exceed even the depths of Chinese wisdom.

Right now, Communism holds China in an iron vise. Yet even a recent issue of *China Guidebook*, a publication of the tourist industry, notices "the extraordinary continuity of Chinese civilization," a passage which should be read as a paean to the cohesiveness of a tradition in which scholarship, authority, and wisdom coalesce into a single value, or social substance, that is freely revered. This congruence, in turn, presents endless exploitative and manipulative opportunities for those who hold power. Lenin, in order cruelly to subdue the Russians, had to establish himself as the infallible architect of an indestructible state power, thus accommodating the Russian masochistic worship of brutal authority—a complex undertaking requiring a kinky, prevaricative doctrine. All Mao needed was to establish himself as the source of ultimate wisdom, the inheritor of the mantle of sublime understanding of how things are or how they should be, which can be achieved through poetry, aphorisms, little colorful books—Chinese political soft-core.

Russian submissiveness to power nurtures a subliminal and perverse hatred of that same power, a perfidious abomination that feeds on fear and humiliation. No such hatred is detectable in the Chinese form of submission; instead there is a sort of whimsical docility, a credit given to the wisdom of power, an assumption that the leaders must know something which those of lower status do not. This docility seems to coexist peacefully with the Communist lie about a classless society: the crowds in the streets appear not to mind the huge black limousines of the rulers and the delicate fabric of their Mao tunics. When it comes to the affluence of foreign visitors, on the other hand, the spectacle of Chinese gathering, actually swarming, around any tourist who buys a trifle in a store has something unthreatening but also unsettling about it: they cluster and gawk peaceably, without noticeable anger, yet somehow suffused with a non-hostile contempt toward the bearers of fancy cameras and gold-rimmed glasses.

In postwar Eastern Europe, demonstrative Western affluence was actively resented, felt as an offense —after all, the Poles and Czechs had also won the war, but vinyl and family cars were beyond *their* reach. In today's China, one senses that there is not enough energy for pragmatic and productive hope, so that even envy is meaningless; there remains nothing but listless gawking without desire, apathy without expression. Of course, the Communists interpret this as a disdain for bourgeois goodies and as socialist pride, but we, the recipients of those silent stares, know that this is a mendacious explanation, that the scorn and helplessness we have triggered are so entangled that we are the last who could make out what this concoction really means. A Chinese, regardless of ideological bent, must think *something* about the hordes of tourists with cameras and travelers' checks. Whatever it is, it never appears in their official explicative literature, in our journalism, or in the divagations of scholarly commentators. We do not know to what extent Chinese sensitivities, under the stress of bitterness, determine the reality.

Simplified, both Confucianism and Taoism are philosophies of obedience, of the logic and benefits of authority, far removed from the Byzantine adulation of power which is the root of the Soviet ideological blend. Small wonder that they make Marxism digestible for both the ruled and the ruler: one is assigned a station in life, pursues harmony with one's destiny, and so it goes. Yet it has become clear, now more than ever, that a society can create neither goods nor values without orderly freedom, constructive dissent, pluralism, and heterogeneity. At the end of the 19th century, a tremendous push to adopt Western science, philosophy, and modes of behavior propelled the Chinese intelligentsia toward modernity and regeneration. This trend was associated with radicalism, leftism, revolution; yet after the Communist takeover, as if in keeping with old Chinese wisdom, the West once again was proclaimed the source of moral evil and civic inferiority. During the 1960's, to complete the circle, many in the West concurred in this judgment. The I-Ching, Tai-Chi calisthenics, and acupuncture were declared superior to the *Summa Theologica,* tennis, and the Mayo Clinic; California prostrated itself before an East that was Red. Communism of all brands, of course, had a vested interest in such a trend. But sooner or later, the Chinese will have to repent; Marxism is a Western product—and a defective one to boot. Justice will be done.

Belles-Lettres

IN THE Forbidden City one grasps Voltaire's respect for and infatuation with China. The Forbidden City is not only much larger than Versailles, but it is also more majesically spaced, more complex, and more refined. It conveys an aura of greatness which is hard to define, for it resides in scale, rhythmic order, and in a strange mixture of magnitude, convolutedness, and harmony. The maze of yards and courts and innumerable visual delights, now dusty and faded in disrepair, still comand awe and inspire rapture, communicate a splendid serenity and calmness. The Ming and Ching dynasties may have been bottomless lakes of corruption and iniquity, but their architects knew something about poise and dignity which resulted in a style surpassing other styles.

The legacy of that style was missing from the meetings of writers and intellectuals with whom I had ample opportunity to congregate. In fact,

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those conferences were ludicrous. There may be several explanations as to why Chinese writers speak so flatly in public: a genuine faith in sloganeering, fear, also an inveterate addiction to convention, that is, to transmuting empty formulas into statements.

This is not to say that today's China is without intellectual ferment: according to experts, such rebellion is very much alive and well in the young social strata and has momentous implications. It is not to be found at official literary gatherings, however. The closest thing I heard to a spirited challenge at those encounters was when a high official of the writers' association welcomed us to the Peking chapter headquarters. "Please, sit wherever you wish and feel comfortable—China is a free society," he said, spreading his arms in a gesture of hospitality. Actually, it was difficult to decide whether he was being ironic or coquettish; he certainly wanted everybody to know that even if China is not a free country, we all may banter about it. But unlike in Eastern Europe, where literary circles even under Stalin swarmed with daredevil ironists, his was an isolated case.

In general, congregating with literati in a totalitarian country is a frustrating pastime. They feel entitled to tell us how *our* literature serves imperialism or wallows in impurities while we feel inhibited from saying openly that theirs is a heap of lies and platitudes. In Nanking, I conversed, through a translator, with a novelist who had been presented to us as a sort of people's genius. I had never heard of him before. He had visited the United States some time ago. Asked whether anything surprised him there, he retorted: "Nothing at all." What had struck him as exceptional, or different, I wanted to know. After intense thought, he announced: "People are so busy. . . ." When I suggested that perhaps this bustling enterprise enabled us to provide China with tractors, I saw that the Chinese listeners were nonplussed, and my American colleagues scandalized. I had misbehaved, bent the rules. I found myself in a situation like the one in an old Polish joke about freedom in which an American says: "We are free to say anything we wish against America," and a Russian responds: "So are we."

Whatever undercurrents of literary turmoil there may be, the cultural scene in China today is a far cry from that of Eastern Europe during the last twenty-five years. China is still at the stage where literary edicts are printed on the front pages of official dailies, a practice which has been all but abandoned in Russia and is regarded now as a trivial *faux pas*, in Eastern Europe. Yet we all know that literature has become a seismograph of ideological transfigurations in postwar Communism: political suppression and relaxation are signaled through the castigation and/or praise of books, writers, publishing ventures. After Stalin's death, the spiritual insurrection in Poland began when the right to read Kafka and Camus was wrested from the bewildered Politburo. Chinese intellectuals are aware of Kafka and Camus, but neither the former's metaphysics of totalitarianism nor the latter's moral catastrophism seems to stir their emotions. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was conceived and received in America as an indictment of McCarthyism; in Poland, it was enthusiastically accepted as a metaphorical attack on the Communist murder of culture and on legal gangsterism. It was produced recently in China and seen—according to Western observers—as an indictment of early American capitalism even by intellectually mature audiences. No one, allegedly, saw in its depiction of the murder of basic human values any correlation with what happened during the Cultural Revolution, and is still happening in a modified fashion everywhere in China.

Cognoscenti told us that there are plenty of apocalyptic tremors in the minds (and desk drawers) of Chinese writers, that desperate growls are heard in private exchanges, that the courageous and the despondent publish their protests in Hong Kong and smuggle them back into the country. But somehow no work of genius, or of utter outrage and warning, has yet emerged. If it had, we would have known about it, the language barrier notwithstanding, just as we immediately were aware of a Pasternak or a Solzhenitsyn.

During our parleys, Chinese publishing bureaucrats reproached us for translating so little of their output: we tried assiduously to explain that in America people buy what is either entertaining or magnificent, that the latter may come from any ideological direction, but if it is highbrow literature it must also be revealing. The Chinese smiled with polite disbelief at such an obsolete way of providing society with books.

WHAT is disconcerting is that the grand theme is still waiting, when only a few years ago a considerable latitude was given to writers by the authorities. Sydney Shapiro, a progressive devotee and resident of China, described the Cutural Revolution to us as a nightmare grounded in Marcusian logic: people were hounded to complete physical and mental ruin in the name of principles like "freedom is oppression," or "production, if successful, is anti-human." People were defenestrated and maimed, driven to extremes of self-denigration, trampled to death figuratively and literally. Often such merciless persecution was inflicted for a simple remark like "trains should arrive on time"—mortal blasphemy for cultural revolutionaries ready to slay any innocent who dared to suggest that the Chinese railway system should work like the bourgeois one. Listening to Shapiro's crisp, lucid, and (now) dispassionate narration, I thought about the calamity that is inevitable when the utopianism of idiots is manipulated by absolute rulers, and about what might have

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happened to *us* if the Berkeley students in the mid-1960's had had the support of the federal government. The claim of radicalism to represent human nature is our era's curse; how lucky we were that our society could absorb its episode of radical sordidness with relatively minor losses. In China, the coupling of manic aberration with political radicalism turned life into a sinister parody of itself. That no great work has yet emerged about the debasement of humanity by the demented and power-thirsty says something about China's present cultural situation.

"I was a coolie," the aforementioned Shanghai giggler said, when once we touched upon the Cultural Revolution. "I was ground down to the condition of a coolie. Three generations of my family, editors and publishers, some Marxists, all humanitarians and revolutionaries, had devoted their lives to the eradication of the notion of a coolie. And after we won, I was again a coolie." A grimace contorted his face, neither laughter nor a smile: it looked like an excuse for confessing so much. It reminded me how often wisdom and docility had given way in China's history to fanatical cruelties—and that the Communist mandarins had better be aware that nothing engenders greater revulsion than blatant ambiguity in political messages. The hatred of the Gang of Four has been institutionalized, but until the truth is told as it can only be told in works of literary consciousness, and the recent past thus fully illuminated, the temptation will always loom to commence a follow-up slaughter.

Ambiguities floated freely during our visit with Mrs. Ding Ling, the grande dame of Communist letters, a sort of young André Malraux and Rebecca West combined. She was the novelistic hope of the Communist intelligentsia before the revolution; having established a reputation for independence of mind, she later had problems both in her personal relations with Mao and with Mao's literary directives; then she basked in the glory of a Stalin prize; and—finally—she was humiliated and physically mauled by the henchmen of the Cultural Revolution. Now, she is enjoying a comeback; she received us matriarchally in a mammoth Chinese armchair festooned with white lace and placed in the middle of the room. "A writer's integrity comes only from the people," she instructed us. How embarrassing, I thought. Even if by "people" she meant not the Marxist-Leninist fiction but humanity itself, it still remained an awful truism, and a falsehood to boot. Let us hope that someone will yet arise to turn sensibility into wisdom, and create a literature that will be at least one notch up from a seismograph.

The American Liberal in China

As a veteran of the certitude that Communism, in whichever version, is mankind's most baneful scourge, I keep hoping that contact with Communist reality will have devastating effects on other people's well-intentioned, starry-eyed ignorance and naiveté. It is a futile hope.

These days, the American liberal in China is confused. *This* China is a trying test for his noble, indomitable American decency. During the 1950's he may have settled for a lot of preconceived notions, and he still may call what happened here liberation rather than revolution, in accordance with official Communist terminology. He is unwilling, even now, to talk about the cost in lives of that enterprise, which in some assessments was even higher than the balance of the Soviets' six-decade-long murder spree. In keeping with the liberal catechism, he may hold that in pursuit of their dream for a better mankind, the Chinese Communists were (and still are) morally entitled to act ruthlessly, the side effects notwithstanding. If they have not achieved a better world, their effort still should be considered a reliable promise toward such a world. So why dwell on the rivers of human blood, the stench of sociopolitical tyranny, and the savage subjugation of natural rights? After all, even according to unfriendly statistics the longevity of the peasants has increased. The liberal, of course, never credits this longevity to penicillin, which can now be produced even by the most primitive chemical industry, nor to the Communist concept of slavery, so different from that of the emperors and warlords in insuring the continuation of the labor supply, but to the meager hope that "it" somehow works. The transcendental fragrance of Communist purity may have become mysteriously befouled in our time, the promise knavishly abused, but one is expected to retain a heavy-hearted admiration for those who tried and failed.

Thus, when a liberal in Peking in 1982 sees the street-corner vegetable markets in which the longer-living peasants are now free to peddle some edible weeds, he often applauds, but at the bottom of his heart he also bewails the death of "pure" Communism and regrets the nascent commercial practicality whose sequel may be pushcart capitalism, which in due course could lead to a family car for everybody. The American liberal knows that *too much* purity must lead to a Cultural Revolution, a firm no-no these days, so he proclaims his hope that things will improve, but cannot help sighing over the Chinese Communists' present obsession with the profit motive. He is actually a sentimental neo-colonialist: his most ardent wish is to preserve intact the Communist *couleur locale*, regardless of the sufferings and deprivations of the natives.

As everybody knows, the American liberal is a person not of reason but of conscience. This is why he will not ascribe the immense crowds of loiterers who pack Chinese temples, museums, and sightseeing locales at every hour of the day to unemployment, which is officially nonexistent, but to the hunger for edification which is possible only in a

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classless society. His most common cognitive somersault is the discounting of existential and moral reality in favor of a theory of economics. When forced to concede the latter's failure, he returns to preaching about justice, which, of course, under this systemic despotism is the first victim. From there, his argument begins to sound distressingly familiar. The poverty is abject, he admits, but nobody is starving in the streets. That's true: all day long, people squat in the dusty pavements of classless Peking and eat doughy, greasy pancakes directly from the wrappings—exactly as they have done over the last three millennia in this oldest big-city civilization on earth. Today, almost everybody is assured of such a pancake (it costs about a penny), a big victory for Chinese Maoism, but is that it? Is there no price attached to this victory?

The American liberal is not entirely blind—he notices that his official host can dine with him in the Roast Duck restaurant, one of the finest eateries on this planet, while others are abysmally deprived. But this does not change his senseless, irrational, anti-empirical persuasion that there is more equality around the Halls of Supreme or Complete Harmony than there is between Fifth and Lenox Avenues in New York. He can perceive political gangsterism in Cook County, Illinois, but not in what the Red Guards did in the 1960's, or in what every political unit still does in a legal manner today everywhere in China.

In Xi'an we visited an excavation site of a Neolithic village: it features a recreation of the interior of a mud dwelling. Shortly thereafter, in Nanking, our driver made a mistake and drove us to the ancient Stone City Citadel by way of the most monstrous slum imaginable; just a peek through empty doorways confirmed that not much had changed from Neolithic times. A sensible American liberal knows that poverty is ugly, but nonetheless he begins and ends his inquiry with the assertion that these people, though poor, have free and compulsory education for their children and socialized medical care free of charge. It does not bother him that the children are brainwashed, inculcated with a world view which he himself deems nonsensical. As for the medical care, what goes on in the heart of an old woman who waits in line for a month to obtain for her dying husband a medication that is cheaply available in every Western pharmacy, and who finally reaches the counter only to be apprised that there is a shortage of this specific drug? She knows perfectly well that the medicine is easily obtained from the orderlies in the party's elite hospitals at black-market prices.

One wonders how long *our* civilization and *our* culture will be able to endure the enshrining of liberal self-deception and illusion. In Nanking, in the villa-museum of a 16th-century poet, Kung Hsien, we admired an ancient scroll painting on which a sage was wielding a broom. "Look," I say to one of my liberal colleagues, "exactly the same as the ones used today by the street sweepers around our hotel." He smiles fondly and says: "Old ways are the best ways." "I agree," I say. "The old and best way is to let children go to their neighborhood school. . . ." He looks at me with indignation. As a decent American liberal, he feeds on a distrust of everything that is good about and in *us*, in *our* past, present, and possible future. He will assert as a sacred article of belief that starvation cycles have been eliminated in China (an incorrect assumption, according to most qualified experts); the fact that it is impossible to live one's own life, in a way which was once simply called freedom, is something he quickly removes from his tender reflections on revolutionary justice. If asked about the imperative which drives starving Haitians to perish in their attempt to reach Florida's shores rather than to make a comfortable escape (with honors) to the people's paradise in Cuba—he feels personally offended. If told that perhaps half of China would do the same but for the distance, he turns intolerant. Confronted with a vast landscape in central China where dwarf pines are coated with dust, the American liberal exclaims with dopey rapture: "What a lovely green!" Obviously he has never seen a golf course in Dubuque.

Rampant Pro-Americanism

Are they sweet and docile, resigned and wise, full of courtly ingrained patience? Or do they—as Chinese and/or as Communists—hate us? I would not risk an unequivocal answer. Anyone who would must have learned something that I did not.

We all remember from TV reports and press photographs those faces contorted with implacable hatred, those posters announcing immediate death to the mad dogs of imperialism—that is, us. It now seems, all Communist propaganda notwithstanding, that such explosions of impassioned anti-Americanism were just a surface ripple. I was accosted all over China by young men who wanted to know everything possible about American agriculture, or symphony orchestras, or cars, or—freedom. The ones asking about the last had bitter grins on their faces, as if ashamed of their own anxious courage. And in Hangchow, I met a young neurosurgeon who, in halting Engish, informed me that he had applied for a grant to study at Rush Medical Center in Chicago. He confided that it is very, very, very difficult to get a travel passport for America. "So why don't you go to England, Germany, Japan?" I asked. "They have great universities and first-class hospitals." He smiled politely and said, "America only," with a gentle resolve. America was what he wanted.

Why so? Perhaps because we never humiliated the Chinese anywhere near so thoroughly as did the Europeans, Russians, and Japanese. We sent

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missionaries who built schools and colleges. The huge Peking (Yen Ching) University campus was completed by Dr. Leighton Stewart, a missionary. It is an enormous, sprawling place with lovely vistas, and in its picturesque old pavilions the bathroom plumbing fixtures, from some factory in turn-of-the-century Connecticut, are still functioning flawlessly.

The most common Communist neurosis, more manifest in China than elsewhere, is the delusion, ensconced in dogma, that the world is neatly divided into bestial enemies and effusive friends, and that the latter ooze with rapture over all things Communist. Like a person who is hated, Communism needs warmth and cozying-up-to on a giant scale; the good will is administratively enforced where it does not originate naturally.

We Westerners have, or should have, no such need. There are many words to denote our interest in China, but friendship is not precisely one of them. Mutual assistance, reciprocal recognition and respect, civility and fairness will do. Friendship assumes a certain commonality of beliefs, and it is obvious even to the American liberal that this is hardly the case. We believe in non-negotiable free inquiry, and that is an unwelcome principle in a Communist country, not expected from visiting friends and actually considered an insult.

Yet even if Americans tend to be more nosy than other callers to Chinese shores, I had an intuitive but distinct sense that we may be better liked than others. This may have to do with what they can get from us. Not raw materials, machinery, long-term loans and credits, or even technology; these can be obtained from many quarters. What we can give them is the expertise to make their society work—their greatest exigency at this juncture of history. From us they can get sincerity and ideas—both quite precious commodities in today's world. And they seem to know it.

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Evolution and Its Discontents

Jeffrey Marsh

It is now a full century since Charles Darwin died, but the theory of evolution associated with his name remains a subject of heated controversy. For the past few years, much publicity has been given to a vigorous continuing debate between defenders of the idea, originally put forward by Darwin, that evolution is an exceedingly gradual process, and aggressive advocates of a radical new approach who argue that the evolutionary process actually consists of long periods of stasis punctuated by rapid bursts of change.

At the same time, battle continues to rage between Darwinians of all stripes, committed to the idea that the fundamental generator of species change is a purely random process on the microscopic scale, and those who argue that biological change is directed and purposeful; of the latter, the most extreme repudiate, commonly on theological grounds, the whole concept of evolution. The site of this battle has recently been a number of state houses, where anti-evolutionists have succeeded in persuading legislators to pass laws mandating equal time in high-school biology classes to Darwinism and to a new theory called scientific creationism which attempts to reconcile the observed facts of biology and geology with a literal reading of the biblical account of creation.

The continuing existence of such wide-ranging disputes provides perhaps the clearest demonstration of the central role played by Darwin's thought in modern biology, a role which serves to unify the far-flung specialties of that broad science by reference to the presumed common descent of all life on earth. The importance of Darwin is one of the central themes in the newly published first volume of Ernst Mayr's *The Growth of Biological Thought.** In this monumental work of intellectual history, Mayr, professor emeritus and former director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, and himself one of the major figures in the development some forty years ago of the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution—the so-called "modern synthesis"—traces the development of biological theories from the thought of the ancients to the modern era.

Mayr shows how the gradually developing awareness of the vast range of living forms in the world made it more and more difficult to regard taxonomy, the systematic classification of life forms, as a simple sorting of creatures into fixed places along a static and ideal Great Chain of Being, as the Greeks and medieval Christian philosophers had believed. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the discovery of whole new classes of fauna through geographic exploration, new familiarity with the world of microorganisms made possible by the invention of the microscope, and the unearthing of fossils obviously very different from living species led to a variety of attempts to propose evolutionary theories. All of these presented glaring problems until Darwin put forward his carefully argued scheme.

In broad terms, both the historical background of Darwin's revolutionary theory and the content of that theory are part of the intellectual patrimony of modernity. The twenty-two-year-old Charles Darwin, an avid amateur naturalist whose undistinguished academic record at Cambridge had caused his family to decide he was best suited for a career in the ministry, accepted a position as naturalist on the *Beagle*, hoping that the extensive observations he would be able to make could provide evidence confirming the account of creation given in Genesis. He returned from his voyage some five years later with a completely transformed outlook. Having observed the radical effects of frequent geological upheavals, and the diversity and distribution of life forms on islands and continents, he was led to the idea that the contemporary plethora of species, each suited to its particular ecological or geographic niche, had evolved from common ancestors. That the distribution of species on earth had changed drastically over the ages was demonstrated by the existence of fossils, and evidence for the common ancestry of different species was provided by the limited number of basic body plans and by the frequent presence of vestigial organs of no apparent current use but vital in assumed ancestral stages.

The idea of common descent was not original with Darwin; his essential contribution was the de-

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* Harvard University Press, 974 pp., $30.00.

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velopment of a natural mechanism for evolution. Malthus had noted the propensity of natural populations to increase beyond limit unless somehow checked, and Darwin saw the evolutionary implications of this insight. If the vast number of individuals in any population are in ruthless competition with one another for a limited supply of resources, then those possessing any heritable quality that gives them some slim competitive advantage will survive preferentially and pass on this advantage to their descendants. It was Darwin's observations of the great diversity of form among individual members of any single species, plus the evidence—supplied by plant and animal breeders—that this random divergence could be purposefully channeled into different lines of descent, that brought him to the concept of natural selection. According to this concept, the pressures of competition dictated by the facts of geography and the nature of the food supply led, after the passage of eons of geological time, to the emergence of all the diverse species observed on earth today.

For over twenty years Darwin kept these ideas largely to himself while he achieved a position of professional eminence in biology with the formidable determination which typified the Victorian era, publishing *inter alia* a multi-volume work on the classification of barnacles that exhibited his mastery of detail and his expertise in taxonomy. Then, in 1858, he received a manuscript written by the much younger naturalist, Alfred Russell Wallace, which independently advanced Darwin's own theory of natural selection, and he was galvanized into the publication of his masterwork, *The Origin of Species.*

Darwin's theory, with its denial of the literal scriptural account of creation, caused a storm among orthodox Christian believers, but the mass of illustrative detail and supportive argument he provided, together with the general Victorian partiality to the notion of gradual progress, facilitated the rapid assimilation into common discourse of the idea of evolution by natural selection. When Darwin died in 1882 he was a sufficiently eminent Victorian to receive the ultimate accolade of a resting place in Westminster Abbey.

THE Darwinian theory was welcomed because of the range of phenomena it could be used to explain, but a number of serious questions still had to be resolved. There were three main areas in which 19th-century Darwinism could be, and was, challenged scientifically. The first concerned the evidence: if there were indeed a continual process of gradual evolution, where was the evidence of transitional links between species? A second question concerned the mechanism of evolution: by the conventional definition, a species is a reproductively isolated group of organisms; how, then, can a new species actually come into being? A third problem, possibly the most challenging theoretically, was to explain in detail how small random changes could result in the development of new and highly specialized organs integrated with the rest of a creature's anatomy. For example, what series of random events could result, in certain varieties of snakes, in the simultaneous acquisition of glands producing complex and highly toxic substances to which the snake is itself immune, fangs suitable for injection of these toxins, pumping mechanisms, and connections to the snake's circulatory and nervous system?

It was only in the middle years of the 20th century, following the assimilation of the new knowledge of genetics, that a more fully consistent theory of evolution emerged. The neo-Darwinist theory, the "modern synthesis," provided answers to all of these questions in a manner that satisfied a broad consensus across all the areas of biology. As we shall immediately see, however, even this theory has been found wanting by critics both within and outside professional ranks.

The modern synthesis answered the first question, that of the observational evidence for evolution, by stipulating that the fossil record is incomplete by its very nature, but that it contains *enough* evidence to make the hypothesis of gradual evolution highly plausible. Thus the famous fossil archaeopteryx (a familiar character in the comic strip *B.C.*) is cited as a transitory form between reptiles and birds, while long chains of fossil forms extending back through multiple geological strata are identified as spanning the ancestry of various present species, notably the horse.

Against this, skeptics argue that ordering fossils in this fashion merely assumes what it purports to prove. The modern "punctuationist" school, following a ten-year-old suggestion of Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge, maintains that while the fossil record does irrefutably demonstrate that evolution has occurred, the broken nature of that record suggests strongly that, at least on a geological time scale, the appearance of new species is much more abrupt than has been assumed by orthodox evolutionists. The record of the fossils, as the punctuationists read it, shows that species typically continue virtually unchanged for millions of years, but then radically different forms develop suddenly and in turn persist for similarly lengthy periods, sometimes alongside their own ancestral forms. If there are transitional forms, they last for so few generations that their chances of fossilization are negligible.

This is one point in a more general theoretical disagreement between the orthodox neo-Darwinists and the punctuationists which is discussed in a sophisticated but not overly technical fashion for the general reader by the Johns Hopkins paleontologist Steven Stanley in his *The New Evolutionary Timetable: Fossils, Genes, and the Origin of Species.** The classical Darwinian argument reduces

* Basic Books, 222 pp., $16.75.

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evolution to a competition between individuals, with natural selection determining the future of the species. The punctuationists do not dispute the existence of this process, microevolution, but they argue that events on a larger scale are determined by a process they term macroevolution, which takes place on a higher level and in which the actors are whole species rather than individuals. Direct competition does not play a dominant role in the development of new species, according to the punctuationists—who place a greater emphasis on the periodic mass extinctions of whole classes of species, often in catastrophic fashion.

One well-publicized example cited by the punctuationists and others has to do with the extinction of the dinosaurs, which some now regard as having taken place over a dramatically short interval, when environmental conditions suddenly changed. The fossil record shows a number of such sudden transitions, as huge classes of creatures that had dominated an entire geological epoch abruptly vanished, to be replaced by other dominant classes in the next epoch. Environmental changes at the boundary of the two epochs, the punctuationists assert, made certain classes of species more viable than others; the absence of competition, under the special transitional circumstances, facilitated the rapid spread of the new species.

This emphasis on the rapid creation of species grew out of a particular phenomenon discussed by the modern synthesis. The laws of statistics tells us that chance plays a much more important role in small samples than in large ones. The application of this insight by geneticists answered the second basic question that had bothered 19th-century critics of Darwin who wondered how minor changes in a few individuals could spread throughout a large population and cause a species to evolve. The answer was that when such advantageous changes happened to arise in a subgroup isolated from the main body of the species (typically by a geographical barrier), they could spread so rapidly that in the course of a few generations the genetic makeup of the subgroup would differ sufficiently from the original species to isolate it reproductively, thus making it a new species. While neo-Darwinians and punctuationists agree on this mechanism, they diverge considerably on how many generations it takes.

EVOLUTIONARY thinkers had a tougher time, both technically and philosophically, in answering the third question, that of the origin of the changes which natural selection channels into the more perfect adaptation of organisms to their environments. They rejected both the pre-Darwinian ideas of Lamarck (although his concept of the inheritance of acquired characteristics was more subtle and less absurd than the popular caricature of it) and the post-Darwinian heresy of the orthogenetic movement which believed that the direction of evolution is preordained rather than contingent on circumstances. The modern synthesis also rejected the idea, associated most often with the name of Richard Goldschmidt, that large changes could be brought about by macromutations which produced in one giant leap the founding members of new species. Rather, change was held to come about through the gradual accumulation of small mutations, random variations in gene structure, which in turn controlled the external form of the organism.

But how can a random accumulation of small mutations give rise to highly specialized organs which require the development of a number of different and complex systems at the precise time they will be useful to the whole individual in its environment? The answer developed by the neo-Darwinians had three components. First, the time constraint was relaxed by noting that many mutations are neutral at the time they occur, with neither positive nor negative implications for the organism. Such neutral mutations may continue to be carried by the genetic material of the species, thus being available for selection at the appropriate time. Next, it was pointed out that the connection between the genetic structure of an organism (the genotype) and its observable anatomical manifestation (the phenotype) is quite complex, so that one gene can control a fair number of large-scale features and thus there need not be many individual mutations. Finally, the neo-Darwinians argued that adaptations originally selected for utility in one function may at later stages prove suitable for others; for example, feathers useful for flight in birds could have served earlier as a heat-regulating medium. (This last concept has traditionally been called preadaptation, but the disturbingly teleological overtones of that term have led to a recent suggestion by the ever-resourceful Stephen Jay Gould that the word "exaptation" be used instead.)

THESE fundamental arguments over the mechanisms of evolution arise because, as Mayr emphasizes, evolutionary theory is primarily historical in nature rather than mathematical on the pattern of the physical sciences. Although evolutionary arguments can certainly be expressed in sophisticated mathematical form, observation and experiment provide such a limited base of nonspeculative knowledge that the overall "feel" of the arguments will play a strong role in their acceptability to different scientists at different times.

The difficulties of reaching a consensus on evolutionary mechanisms even by those comfortably within the confines of a common theoretical structure are perhaps illustrated most effectively by the specific case of the earliest stage of the evolutionary process, the origin of life on earth. The conventional approach suggests that on the early earth, some billions of years ago, lightning discharges in the hydrogen-rich atmosphere initiated reactions

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between simple organic molecules in the primeval oceans to produce a mixture of more complex molecules such as amino acids; with the passage of time, these combined into chains that eventually hooked up to form the much more complicated proteins and nucleic acids whose reactions created the chemical basis of life.

The major support for this theory is provided by experiments performed some thirty years ago which demonstrated the possibility of the first and simplest stage of the process. There has so far been no demonstration of the later, and far more difficult, stages, and indeed no confirmation that conditions on the early earth were similar to those hypothesized. If one simply relies on probability, it is exceedingly unlikely that relatively simple molecules should have combined at random to produce the immensely complex interacting structure of DNA, RNA, and protein molecules necessary for the metabolism and reproduction of living creatures. But if one accepts the overall evolutionary picture, then one can tentatively accept this part of it as a necessary precursor stage, assuming that as knowledge accumulates in the fashion typical of scientific advance, either the current version will be more convincingly fleshed out or a better theory will supersede it. If the probability of the conventional theory seems too low, one can suggest an alternative.

One such alternative scheme, supported by Francis Crick, co-winner of the Nobel Prize for his contribution to the elucidation of the structure of DNA, is expounded in his book, *Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature.** According to Crick, the earliest life on earth was in the form of bacteria, sent from somewhere in space by a more advanced civilization seeking to spread life, Johnny Appleseed fashion, throughout the universe. A slightly different approach, the most notable advocates of which are the distinguished astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle and his collaborator Chandra Wickramasinghe, asserts that bacteria distributed throughout space were brought to earth by encounters with cometary tails. To their supporters, who by any account are serious scientists, these unorthodox, and indeed bizarre, ideas appear more plausible than the conventional account.

The existence of such wide and fundamental areas of disagreement, and the inaccessibility to direct observation of many processes and phenomena which are essential to the confirmation of the mechanism of evolution, have been cited as objections to its being granted the status of a scientific theory altogether. But in fact, as is pointed out by the philosopher Philip Kitcher in his *Abusing Science: The Case Against Creationism*,† the same objections could be raised against many other theories advanced in times past which have subsequently become firmly based and universally accepted. The key ingredients of scientific thought are the attempts to connect observation with logical reasoning, to devise tests of hypotheses, and to keep testing the whole structure for consistency both internally and with other branches of science. In all these respects, and whether or not some of their theories turn out to be correct, evolutionary biologists act much as do other scientists.

Kitcher points out that even for scientific theories which are universally accepted, a determined skeptic can always find problem areas or interpret particular phenomena without using the conventional explanation. This is especially true in the case of evolution, with its even stronger use of inferential argument as opposed to direct observation. Yet if we look at the closest analogy in the physical sciences, which is cosmology, the study of the history of the universe, we find that an ever increasing observational capability and reasonable extrapolation of experimentally confirmed principles of particle physics, relativity theory, and thermodynamics have given rise to a standard model, the big-bang theory, which is widely accepted, even though there remain serious observational gaps. It is perhaps not unreasonable to hope that in the case of biology, where comparable insights into the microscopic structure of living matter have come at an ever increasing pace in recent decades, similar success may be achieved in the future.

GROUNDS for this hope lie in the way in which the fundamental study of biology has already contributed to the clarification of evolutionary theory. Mayr's historical exposition shows how this process has operated in the 120-odd years between Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species* and the present.

Knowledge of the means by which living organisms can exhibit both similarity and diversity was given its initial impetus by Mendel's formulation of his laws of inheritance, which by one of the ironies of history languished in near-total obscurity for thirty-four years following their first publication in 1866, at the very height of Darwin's career. According to the laws of combination of genes, the irreducible particles of inheritance, inherited traits are not averages of the parents' contributions but all-or-nothing patterns, with the possibility that recessive genes may lie dormant until two such genes from different parents combine in some later generation.

Cell biologists discovered the material basis of genetic inheritance in the chromosomes, identifiable microscopic bodies within the cell nucleus, which fission and recombine during the process of reproduction and carry the sites of the genes themselves. Biochemists have shown that the chemical substance of the chromosomes is made up of large molecules called nucleic acids, whose structure was finally determined in the 1950's when molecular biologists,

* Simon & Schuster, 192 pp., $12.95.
† MIT, 213 pp., $15.00.

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using techniques borrowed from physics, demonstrated that the essential genetic material, DNA, is a double helix of two long chains of complex molecules entwined in a lovers' embrace, which can unwind and duplicate themselves separately, and whose intricately folded three-dimensional arrangement enables different parts of the molecule to give coded instructions to create the proteins and other substances needed for all the functions of the miniature but highly sophisticated factory which is the living cell. The structure of the DNA molecule explains the source of the tremendous variability in natural populations, especially in sexually reproducing species where large numbers of genes can combine and rearrange themselves in a bewildering variety of ways, widened even more by the relatively rare but regular occurrence of mutations (understood on this level as errors in duplication which result in changes in the DNA molecule).

Since the basic material and processes of all living forms have thus been shown to be universal, it is now possible to distinguish different species microscopically through differences in their DNA, rather than visually through differences in their external (morphological) characteristics. In general, classification in this fashion results in an ordering of species similar to the more conventional method. But it has proved particularly useful in a new mode of classification, termed cladistics, which arranges species according to their common features rather than their presumed descent, so that those with the greatest number of common features are placed closer together. There is no one-to-one correspondence, however, between genetic and morphological differences, since it has been found that some genes control many morphological characters, while some characters are under the control of a number of genes. A promising approach is the quantitative measurement of differences between species by means of a molecular "clock": if mutations occur at a known rate, it is possible to translate differences in DNA structure to time differences. If the time scales established in this fashion are consistent with those suggested by fossil evidence, which in turn can be dated by a variety of independent methods including radioactive dating and tree-ring counts, then the plausibility of the whole theory is further enhanced.

We may say, then, that while there is insufficient evidence to decide absolutely whether various evolutionary theories are or are not correct, they certainly represent scientific thought. Because of the unavoidable gaps in the evidence, however, there remains much opportunity for heterodox ideas. In *The Neck of the Giraffe: Where Darwin Went Wrong,** Francis Hitching presents for the general reader a number of problems in conventional (and even punctuationist) Darwinian theories. Though he fully accepts that evolution has occurred, Hitching argues strongly that something more is needed to explain it than is provided by the modern synthesis. While abundant direct evidence may exist for variation and change over time within suitably defined species boundaries, there is, Hitching writes, no convincing demonstration of one species being transformed into another. He accepts the punctuationist argument that the fossil record disproves the idea of gradual evolutionary change assumed by the modern synthesis, but rejects the belief, which punctuationists share with orthodox neo-Darwinists, that the origin of specialized organs can be accounted for by the mechanism of preadaptation.

Hitching cannnot formulate any conclusion more specific than a dissatisfaction with natural selection and an expectation that a theoretical breakthrough will occur in the near future. But he appears to believe that there is some underlying law of form which drives evolution in the appropriate direction. He is intellectually venturesome enough to mention a number of unorthodox proposals, such as the sophisticated theory proposed by the Nobel Prize-winning chemical physicist Ilya Prigogine that when a system far from equilibrium becomes sufficiently complex, it can reproduce and transform itself into an even more complex state rather than breaking down as might be expected. But Hitching lacks the technical qualifications to provide real guidance in his discussion of this and many other topics he takes on which are even farther from the mainstream of current scientific thought.

If Hitching and the skeptics he cites feel that modern evolutionary theory is still lacking some key insight, they agree that Darwin's thought resulted in a giant step in the direction of understanding nature. The creation-science movement, by contrast, rejects evolution root and branch—insisting upon the immutability of species; castigating the time scale developed by evolutionary biology, geology, and astronomy as a mere hypothetical construct based upon an unjustified extrapolation from an extremely limited period of experimental observation; and pointing to various geological anomalies in order to prove that the ordering of fossils used by evolutionists is unjustifiable.

The creationists go on raising objections which evolutionists regard as long since resolved, maintaining for example that the development which is assumed by evolutionary theory to occur through randomly generated changes contradicts the second law of thermodynamics. A far better explanation of how the world came to its present state, they claim, is provided by a literal reading of the early chapters of Genesis, belief in which requires no greater suspension of rationality than does acceptance of the far-fetched reasoning of Darwin and his

* Ticknor & Fields, 288 pp., $13.95.

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followers. Both theories are equally scientific or non-scientific, since assent to either depends ultimately on an act of faith.

To this line of argument, defenders of evolution, who are represented ably by Philip Kitcher in his book, give an answer which has both defensive and aggressive components. The defensive answer marshals the evidence for evolutionary theory and refutes point by point the specific criticisms of the creationists. The aggressive answer states that the alternative explanations provided by the creation scientists are extremely strained and, more importantly, derive not from an open-minded attempt to answer particular problems in the normal way of science, exemplified by Darwin's approach, but from an ingenious (and disingenuous) effort to defend a set of religious beliefs. They are consequently by definition not part of science.

In a celebrated 1981 case in Arkansas, testimony along these lines persuaded the court to strike down a recently formulated state law mandating equal time for the teaching of creation science alongside evolution. Judge Harold Overton held that the teaching of creation science in the public schools was a constitutionally proscribed establishment of religion, because its basic aim of confirming Scripture and its rejection of the fundamental scientific rule—willingness in principle to abandon previously held assumptions—removed it from the category of scientific theory.

Now it is certainly possible to construct a theory which combines acceptance of the laws of nature as they currently operate with a belief that the biblical account of creation is to be taken literally. But how one is to translate the terms used into the operational language of modern sience is itself not a trivial problem, and it is also the case that the intellectual gymnastics involved in such a program are not part of what is normally described as science. The claim of the creation-science movement that open-minded investigation leads naturally to a fundamentalist description of creation is, then, as Judge Overton ruled, intellectually dishonest. But it must be seen as a response to a situation regarded as desperate.

Creationist literature, examples of which are quoted or reproduced by both Hitching and Kitcher, is quite explicit about what it considers the most dangerous aspect of evolutionism, and we may paraphrase the concern as follows: the only way man knows he is divinely commanded to act morally is through the Bible. If the absolute truth of the Bible is impugned, as it is by the teaching of evolution, men will first come to believe that they are no more than animals, and then begin to act accordingly. If we look around us, we can see that the process has already begun.

Sophisticated intellectuals will have no trouble attacking this argument. In the final chapter of *Abusing Science*, Philip and Patricia Kitcher do so at length. One can believe in the divine origin of the Bible without reading it literally; mankind can be related to the rest of the animal kingdom biologically while remaining distinct from it morally; even if some evolutionists act immorally, it does not follow that their belief in evolution is false. All of these arguments are correct, but the fundamentalists still have a point.

To begin with, it is not unduly cynical to question whether students in more than a handful of elite high schools ever learn what was stressed so heavily by the expert testimony in the Arkansas creationism trial—namely, that the hallmarks of a scientific theory are that it is explanatory, tentative, and falsifiable. It is far more likely that the mass of pupils in the real word, who in substantial numbers manage to graduate lacking even the rudiments of literacy and numeracy, will come away with a few highly oversimplified concepts, taught to them in dogmatic fashion.

Indeed, in an interesting footnote to the Arkansas trial, with its elaborate expositions of the philosophy of science, the New York City Board of Education recently barred several biology texts on the grounds of insufficient fealty to Darwin. Upholders of open scientific debate were not heard regretting the opportunities thereby lost for classroom discussion of the problematic areas in the theory of evolution, or the nature of scientific theories. The standard response of the educational establishment to any suggestion that such subjects might be as valuable intellectually as a straight exposition of conventional theory is that there is no time in already limited science curricula for topics not strictly scientific, and no place in the public schools for anything that might end up involving sensitive religious issues. Kitcher adds the consideration that unprepared teachers and naive adolescents would be unable to answer effectively the sophistry of cunning creationist arguments—a rather strange response coming from a philosopher. All of these arguments rest on, but do not articulate, the assumption that is transmitted clearly by the school curricula themselves: scientific knowledge is the only serious source of truth. It is this message, more than the details of evolutionary theory, that is behind the conflict with the creationist movement.

IN THEIR failure to realize that science and religion of necessity use different languages, today's creation scientists repeat, but in the opposite direction, the mistake that Darwin made over a century ago and that continues to be made by so many of his intellectual heirs. The scientific method has been shown to be ideally suited to investigate in detail the workings of the natural universe, but it can say nothing about its ultimate purpose or man's proper role in it. To conclude, from evidence that the laws of nature have a substantial statistical component, that the world is without purpose, and that man is an accident of nature is not only unscientific, but also reflects a failure of comprehension.

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Just as do the creation scientists, pre-Darwinian biologists regarded species as unchanging fixed types, variations within which were embarrassing anomalies to be explained away, inconsistent with the idealistic concepts inherited originally from Greek philosophy. In Darwin, evidence of the prodigality of nature provided not only the key to evolution but also a reason to reject the concept of divine creation because of his inability to believe that God could be so wasteful. Both of these crabbed approaches, lacking the generosity of spirit needed to recognize the limitations of human intellect in comprehending the infinite, can be contrasted with that taken by the rabbis of the Talmud, to whom it was precisely the wide variation of populations within species that showed the unmistakable stamp of their divine origin.

The development of a scientific description of the universe difficult to reconcile with a world view based on Scripture has indeed presented believers with a new challenge. However, a world of statistical laws raises fewer philosophical problems than one which is strictly deterministic, and religious believers going at least as far back as the author of the book of Job (traditionally identified with Moses himself) have faced far more serious challenges to faith than the purely intellectual one posed by evolutionary theory. Perhaps the most fundamental question that can be asked by scientists is how it is that human logic is able to describe the world so well. The answer to this question lies outside the realm of science, but was provided many centuries ago by Rabbi Akiva: "Beloved is man, for he was created in God's image, but it is by even greater love that he is informed that he was created in God's image."

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Culture Among the Nations

Dorothy Rabinowitz

The Second UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies convened in Mexico City from July 26 to August 6. The following notes are excerpted from a record of events kept by the author, who attended as a member of the press.

Day 1

THE conference center is set in a bleak working-class section, a long drive from the shining tourist hotels where most of the delegations are housed. The full implications of this setting will break on the delegates shortly, when they discover that there is no place nearby to eat lunch —that is, where it would be safe to eat—and that they will as a consequence have to pile into the special buses and embassy cars a minimum of four times a day, to be ferried back and forth across town through traffic compared to which New York's garment center has the peaceableness of a country mall.

This is our first afternoon in Juarez Hall, site of the plenary speeches, a large auditorium through whose portals now pass the familiar swirl of dashikis, turbans, and three-piece suits which, together with the impeccably refined drone coming in over the translation earphones, identify this as a United Nations event. (The UN ambience looks and feels the same, everywhere.)

The plenary speeches begin. The point of these, a UNESCO spokesman has explained earlier, is to set the tone of the conference and to serve as a basis for the resolutions that will come out of it. The chairman of the executive board of UNESCO rises to address the question whether man, an unstable creature, is equipped to deal with the many cultural innovations which are the product of his own creativity. It seems he is not.

The Minister of Culture of Guatemala, speaking next, describes the life and fate of the Guatemalan novelist, Miguel Asturias, a discourse that goes on at considerable length. A member of the Venezuelan delegation begins muttering into his Nehru jacket. For well over an hour and a half, the Guatemalan goes on enumerating the milestones in Asturias's career and the broad cultural implications thereof. "Stupidity," the Venezuelan hisses. "Listen how he is giving everybody a headache with Asturias." The delegate from the African National Congress sitting nearby also wears a scowl, but this, it will become clear, has nothing to do with the speaker or his subject. For the next two weeks of her appearance in the conference room the cultural representative of the African National Congress will confer on everyone the same look of stony hostility.

The Minister of Culture of Tunisia is next to ascend the podium. He tells the assemblage that a certain state created by the United Nations is guilty of "conspiring to deprive another people of its cultural identity" and that one of the greatest assaults on cultural freedom is "archeological colonialism." The ravaging effects of archeological colonialism, we learn, can best be seen in the city of Jerusalem.

During the applause for the Tunisian, a voice behind me murmurs that we have just heard some excellent points made. The intonations here—a familiar mix of rectitude and gentility—identify the speaker as an American of the liberal, enlightened class. The voice, indeed, belongs to a woman representing the National Endowment for the Arts, here as an adviser to the American delegation.

Day 2

THE main event, not only today but possibly of the whole plenary session, is a speech by the French Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, accusing the United States of cultural and political imperialism. Everyone, not just the Americans, is startled by the frontal nature of this attack on the United States as an "empire of profit" which "takes over the minds and ways of life" of other countries and which, in particular, threatens the political freedom and existence of Cuba. France, the Minister informs the assemblage, cannot accept this interference with the valuable new society of Cuba. To judge from the volume of applause, Lang's speech is a hit. The Americans call a press conference for this afternoon in order to respond.

Someone observed to me yesterday that next to the Mexican press, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* seem models of journalistic balance and dispassion. I am re-

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minded of this comment at the afternoon press conference, but not only because of the Mexicans. Almost every journalist attending is from the Third World and carries ideological baggage to match. Among the typical reportorial queries directed today at the spokesman for the American delegation: "When do you think the United States government will recognize how much its own people are being hurt by American colonialism?"

A busy social evening of receptions lies ahead, as will be true of every evening. At 6:30 P.M. we pile into cars for the drive back to the hotel, a journey of sudden stops and wild turns. The streets are, as usual, bedlam, a solid mass of buses and cars converging on the same point from all directions, without benefit of lanes. (In Mexico City, I learn, drivers don't pull over to the side when a fire engine or ambulance is trying to get through; they simply go faster.) Today the trip back takes longer, because the Communists are staging a march down the Reforma (the street of tourist hotels), a spectacle clearly intended for the benefit of UNESCO conferees. The parade is interminable, a thicket of signs admonishing the United States to keep hands off El Salvador and Nicaragua and one, bringing up the rear, borne by two women, affirming that "Lesbians Are Fighters in the War on Imperialism."

At tonight's reception—at the residence of John Gavin, our Ambassador to Mexico—the talk among the American guests concerns the best way to deal with the insult from the French. One school holds that there should now be a total boycott of the French reception, being held later this same evening. Another school holds that we *should* send a representative, but from the lower echelons of the delegation. The latter school prevails. This looks to be a result consistent with our chronic reluctance to take unambiguous action. (Words are another matter.) There is something about *action*—including even the action of not going to a reception—that suggests too much of consequences; this fear—a national infirmity—is inextricably linked with our terror of anything resembling the warlike.

The American reception, however, is a glittering affair, as witness the receiving line. There is no denying the impact of this sight, at the entrance: John Gavin and Charlton Heston, U.S. Ambassador and member of the U.S. delegation respectively, gleaming down at guests from the doorway, the embodiments of all that Hollywood once, successfully, projected to the world as American: virility, glamor, warmth, style, *size*. Every Third World male in the room, and almost every European, comes up to their kneecaps.

Day 3

We have not heard the last about the French speech, a copy of which is virtually impossible to obtain. It is explained in the UNESCO press office, a room whose general tone and order are roughly equivalent to those of Mexico City traffic, that it is up to each delegation to distribute copies of its speeches. The French, who profess to be astonished at the intensity of the response to Lang's speech, have decided to make copies scarce.

More attacks on Israel and Zionism come from the podium. There are several of these a day, comparing Israel's move into Lebanon with the genocide perpetrated at Auschwitz. Indeed, the Minister of Culture of Nicaragua passes out a statement which asserts that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon is a crime against humanity *greater* than the crimes perpetrated in the Holocaust. One notes, however, the consistent references to Hiroshima and Nagasaki included in this rhetoric. Although Israel is ostensibly the target of attack, such references, as well as the continual efforts to represent Israel as a tool of the United States, show that America, in fact, is the real focus. It is no accident that we hear so much about Hiroshima, or that elaborately painted signs, a story high and a block long, declaring (in Spanish) that "Israel Is the Lackey of U.S. Imperialism" have blossomed on walls throughout the entire city, including one just opposite the conference center.

Some speeches of note today: The Polish Minister of Culture takes the podium. He observes that all the world is aware of socialist Poland's long tradition of freedom and tolerance for minorities. The Minister of Culture of Byelorussia is next. The Byelorussian notes that cultural exchange can promote harmony and unity among men, and also that the Israelis are practicing genocide in Lebanon. The Italians are coming up. Earlier in the day this prospect held some interest for the Americans; the Italian delegation, it appears, has prepared an elegantly poisonous reply to the Lang speech, accusing the French of trying to curry favor with the Third World. The Americans are delighted—but prematurely, as we find out. The Italians quietly hand their statement over to the French, and then the Italian Minister of Culture takes the podium to address the delegates on the social challenge of our time, "the need to reinstate man as the center of the development process." Before moving into his theme, the Minister takes note of the very important speech given yesterday by the French Minister of Culture, and of the issues raised therein.

Late in the evening: Some members of the American delegation have taken to gathering in the hotel lounge to talk over the day's events. These late-night conversations are limited by the noise emanating from the circulating troubadors who serenade us at regular intervals. Still, it's clear enough that the Americans here are a politically harmonious lot on the whole. Tonight a woman attached to the U.S. delegation tells me irately of her afternoon, spent in the company of a U.S. government employee stationed in Mexico City, during which she was subjected to a lengthy lecture on the supe-

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riority of Mexican culture to our own. The cuisine here, she was told, was better than almost anything you could find in the United States, and the supermarkets better still. Mexico City supermarkets stocked items you could never get in the United States, including hibiscus-flavored Kool-Aid.

I do not find this story entirely surprising since the government employee in question is the same man who told me, some days ago, that he has a love-hate relation with his country. Since he is employed by an agency whose purpose is to disseminate information about the United States, I was interested to know what the hate part was. He answered that the United States thought it could meddle in the affairs of other countries, and tell other peoples what to do. "We are a country that has lost its way," he said sadly.

Day 4

JUAREZ HALL gets emptier as, with every passing day, the delegate lounges get fuller. This morning, however, there is excitement *near* Juarez Hall if not inside it, because the former actress Melina Mercouri, now the Culture Minister of Greece, is holding a dialogue on cultural problems with Charlton Heston. Following this encounter, which is brief—the Minister of Culture of the Papandreou government does not wish to engage questions raised by Heston about the lack of freedom in the Soviet Union—she ascends the podium to address the delegates. Minister of Culture Mercouri tells them that the British must return the Elgin marbles to Greece; that women are still "an oppressed continent"; that all Athens is raising its voice on behalf of the Palestinians; that the mass media are in the hands of a certain "majority" (a reference requiring no further elaboration, she means the United States). This, at least, is better, if only slightly, than hearing that the media are in the hands of a certain minority.

In the afternoon comes a speech by the Israeli delegate. At the announcement of the name of the country taking the podium, the delegate from the African National Congress hurls herself from her chair to the door, followed by the Iranians, the East Germans, the Russians, the Cubans, the Poles, and a handful of Arab delegates. The PLO, the Egyptians, and the Iraqis stay. The empty seats left by the walk-outs are somewhat canceled out by increased attendance in the Western delegations. The number attending the plenary speeches from each delegation has these past days dwindled to one, but for this speech the Americans show up in force. The Iraqi representative explains that he has stayed "in order to hear if someone says something against my country."

Speaking in English the Israeli delegate describes the efforts his government has made to preserve religious and cultural monuments in Jerusalem. The Iraqi delegate, excited about something, begins waving his name card in the air for a point of order. No one on the podium notices; the Israeli goes on with his speech. The representative from Iraq later tells me that he has been waving his name plate to protest the phrase, "Muslim rubbish" (which, he says, the Israeli used), because this language is "the greatest insult and atrocity in the world." Apprised of this charge, Israeli delegates explain that the Iraqi's problem is that he can't understand English; their man had spoken of clearing away rubble. The Israeli's speech has anyway been cut short by a note from the chairman instructing him that speeches cannot exceed twenty-five minutes. When questions are raised—all other speakers have been permitted to go on interminably, Cuba for nearly two hours—it is explained that this is a new ruling.

Evening brings the main social event of the conference, a reception for delegates by UNESCO Director General Amadou M'Bow. We arrive at the Hacienda de los Morales, the most elegant of Mexico City's restaurants, a palatial sprawl of gardens linking a series of equally palatial dining rooms. Fifteen hundred UNESCO delegates make their way to buffet tables, on which there is arrayed an impressive quantity of whole pigs. There is entertainment, too, in the form of songs and dances performed by Mexican schoolchildren. I do not get to see much of this (as my companion and I find ourselves seated behind a large screen), but I am assured, later, that the children have performed beautifully. On the way out, a delegate from one of the non-governmental organizations (NGO's) remarks to me that "children, after all, is what this conference is all about, what UNESCO is all about."

Day 5

PLENARY speeches continue.

The representative of Guinea declares that "no culture is superior to any other culture," an idea somewhat at variance with his main theme, that mass media are a danger because they transmit undesirable values from other cultures.

The Minister of Culture of Iceland says that culture is a complex phenomenon and that any attempt to analyze this complex phenomenon would produce unfortunate results. The Minister's speech turns out, itself, to be an excellent illustration of this thesis.

The Minister of Culture of Togo observes that transnational corporations are the cause of wars and illiteracy around the globe.

The cultural representative of the PLO says that the war criminals in Israel are destroying the Palestinians just as the Nazis once destroyed the Jews.

There is an afternoon press conference, at which the Nicaraguan Minister of Culture holds forth to an appreciative audience of mostly Third World reporters. Someone, nevertheless, slips in a question about freedom of the press in Nicaragua (where

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the independent *La Prensa* is regularly shut down by the Sandinista government). The Minister observes, in answer to this question—which he takes, not unreasonably, as suggesting that there is less freedom of the press in Nicaragua than elsewhere in the world—that in his opinion the freedom of bourgeois culture cannot really be called freedom. In fact the greatest danger to his country's survival, the Minister explains, now lies in the area of communications; the United States, with the help of its organs of propaganda, the Associated Press and United Press International, is at this moment preparing the world for an invasion of Nicaragua. A reporter with long experience in Central America later tells me that this is just a mild version of the paranoid hostility toward the United States and everything connected with it that is endemic in that region. He cites one of the female leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution, who undertook not long ago to enumerate the reasons why so many Latin American babies are adopted by Americans. There were just three: so that the babies could be used by Americans for medical experiments, or made into slaves, or impressed into service as spies for the CIA.

Day 6

SATURDAY. The Minister of Culture of Uganda declares that "the world is suffering from cultural pollution," the result of "the penetration of foreign models and values that threaten cultural identity."

The Minister of Culture of Grenada says that developing countries must eliminate transnational industries, lest those countries be "infected with vile and decadent values which are the product of cultural imperialism."

The representative of a Scandinavian country takes the podium to observe that cultural identity is a prerequisite of development.

The impact of these insights is difficult to assess, mainly because there is no one here listening to them. To the right and left, people are reading newspapers; several are dozing. Someone is complaining that his briefcase, with all his conference working papers in it, has been stolen. Eighty percent of the delegates are absent.

Day 7

SUNDAY, a day reserved for the delegates' relaxation. Everyone is off on daylong excursions to resort towns in the countryside. Unwilling to contend with traffic, I choose to spend the day closer by at the anthropology museum and the zoo, excellent choices as it turns out. My companion and I, our minds doubtless befogged by the altitude, then decide we will end our day with a local tour that boasts a bullfight. For some reason —possibly because one of the Americans here has touted the tour as wonderful, and possibly because we have heard somewhere that the bull is not killed in certain countries—it does not occur to us that what we are about to witness has anything in common with what we know a real bullfight to be. This, we soon discover, is the grossest naiveté: what we witness is a real bullfight, which is to say, a slow and brutal slaughter. The trapped animal is stabbed and pierced repeatedly. Covered with blood, the animal sinks to the ground, finally, in a death agony, its neck pierced a last time, while the crowd cheers.

My companion and I flee. There are, we learn, three more animals to be led out and tortured thus this afternoon. (The standard rationale for all this, that the bull has as much chance as the matador, is, a member of the embassy staff later assures me, patently false. The neck muscles are severed by the sword early on, so as to make it impossible for the bull to raise its head.) Even so, we learn on the way back to the hotel that two weeks earlier a matador got himself gored to death by a bull. This news, as we inform the tourist who tells us, is the best we have had all day.

Day 8

EN ROUTE to the morning session, members of the U.S. delegation discuss bullfighting, which subject I have brought up. It is a barbarous spectacle, the man at my right concurs. Most of the others in the car agree.

"But it's *their* culture," comes from the rear. The voice, again, of the National Endowment for the Arts. I ask whether the bullfight might not be a perfect exemplar of those cultural values whose pollution by vile and decadent foreign (for which read American) models we have heard so much about this past week.

"Are we any better," the woman from the National Endowment wants to know, "when we have sports like football?" A man from the State Department murmurs that he doesn't think a bullfight is quite the same. There is general agreement with this position. But the woman from the National Endowment is working her way toward a larger theme: "And who are *we* to feel superior to *anyone* when we make billions of arms to kill people all over the world?"

Everyone understands that this conversation must not continue. A final word, nonetheless, from the National Endowment: "I mean, the whole point of this conference is respect for other cultures—isn't that what this conference is all about?"

This is the second time I had had it explained to me what this UNESCO conference is all about, the first being the other night when it was revealed that children was what it was all about. I forbear telling the National Endowment lady that there are a great many of us under the impression that what this conference is all about is Israel, U.S. imperi-

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alism, South Africa, and the transnational corporations.

The speeches continue, but the real activity this week is in the back conference rooms where delegations are negotiating draft resolutions with one another. The draft resolutions must first pass in committee before being put to a vote by the full conference, but everyone understands that adoption in committee is tantamount to formal adoption by the conference.

Day 9

EXCITEMENT is in the air, as delegates run about from one caucus to another, planning strategies. The negotiations going on behind closed doors are off-limits to me, but an Ambassador (from a major Western ally) provides information. The resolutions, Ambassador X informs me, are now proliferating like cancer. France alone has just produced three more within the past hour, in not one of which can be detected the reasons its authors felt compelled to write it.

For the Americans and the West generally, the fight now comes down to how much of what the Arab-Third World-Communist bloc wants in these draft resolutions can be kept *out*: namely, the anti-American, anti-Zionist, anti-West propaganda which is the draft proposals' sole reason for being.

English translations of the draft resolutions are hard to come by, though Arabic, Spanish, and French versions abound. One Western delegate, an old UNESCO hand, informs me that this shortage is no accident—that the Arab-Third World-Communist bloc has been known, before, to try to hold down to a minimum the English translations of their most propagandistic proposals: the ones they expect the West to oppose most strenuously.

Another old UNESCO hand, an American on the permanent delegation, confides that the final declaration coming out of this conference is going to be comparatively mild: the job of damage control is, from the look of things, going well, far better than it ever has in the past.

I remark that since our diplomats have been showing, of late, an unmistakable tendency to perceive damage control where there is, in fact, only degradation—ours—things may not be going so rosily as he suggests. He tells me that we have to learn to accommodate to the reality of the world as it is.

The atmosphere elsewhere in the room has grown almost merry. This is possibly a result of the fact that the plenary speeches are now over, but more likely it is the promise of battle in the air. The Iranians huddle in their corner of the lounge, their turbaned mullah in the middle, while they plan: it is rumored that in company with the Pakistanis, the Iranians will offer a resolution aimed at Israel that will make all other resolutions of the kind pale by comparison.

The Israelis themselves sit across the lounge with a reporter from a major American newspaper. The reporter is trying to take notes, but he is hampered by the fact that he is bent double in uncontrollable laughter. The head of the Israeli mission to UNESCO has been explaining in detail how things work here, and the various charges directed at his country. "The only thing they didn't say," the Israeli observes, "is that our delegation should be hanged."

All efforts today are bent on lining up support for the resolution battles to come in committee. Americans, seeking help for a resolution in favor of freedom of expression, this afternoon receive a note from the Pakistanis explaining that Pakistan is unable to endorse such a resolution "because Pakistan is an ideological country."

There is talk among some of the Americans and one or two Western allies about inserting the word "totalitarianism" into all the resolutions calling for condemnation of "colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, Zionism" (the buzz words for all the crimes allegedly perpetrated by the non-Communist, Western powers). The head of the American delegation is much in favor of this move, as is its vice-chairman. Ambassador X, also much in favor, promises that there is not the slightest chance of its actually coming to pass because there won't be any support from the other Western powers.

Tonight, the Japanese give a reception, which only the low-ranking echelons of the delegations attend. Everyone else has rushed back to the conference center for a committee meeting. The battle over the resolutions has begun. We learn that the Third World-Arab-Communist bloc is pushing for an immediate vote on certain of its high-priority resolutions. The Western allies, doomed by their numbers to lose any actual vote, want more time for "consideration" of these resolutions—for which read more time for getting language deleted.

The fight tonight is over Resolution 142 submitted by Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, Uganda, Iraq, etc., entitled "Culture and Society, Cultural Identity, and Intercultural Relations with Reference to the Struggle for the Cultural Identity of Liberation Movements."

This resolution, as one might not easily glean from its title, is directed at South Africa, which, it says, has systematically plundered and destroyed the property and "economic infrastructure" and "means of communications" of the "innocent civilians of Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Angola" and which has also massacred defenseless civilians.

The real cause of controversy over this resolution tonight, however, is not South Africa at all, but the reference some paragraphs down to the state of Israel as a supporter of South Africa's apartheid regime, "an alliance based on the common objective of acting as gendarmes of imperialism."

The Americans and their Western allies call for

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further consideration of 142. This produces a chorus of protests from the bloc countries, and cries for points of order. A representative of an Arab country takes the microphone to say that he wishes to vote on 142 now because—as he quite correctly observes—"this resolution fully represents the spirit of the plenary speeches." A Western delegate protests that the resolution is being voted on out of order. Another Western delegate, sitting near me, murmurs that the whole proceeding is illegal: according to the UNESCO bylaws, delegates must be given at least twenty-four hours to consider any resolution. The commission chairman, a Zambian, chuckles throatily throughout this uproar and continues to call on speakers:

"I call on my brother the representative from Algeria."

"I thank my brother the representative from Algeria, I now call on my dear brother the representative from Syria."

Later, a member of the Israeli delegation, unhinged, possibly, by the lateness of the hour, privately asks the Zambian why he uses the term "my brother" every time he calls on an Arab delegate and never when addressing Israelis. Are not Israelis also his brothers?

"Of *course* you are my brother!" the Zambian booms, "I am *your* brother and you are *my* brother." He is, he assures the Israeli, desolated to have made this error.

The argument over 142 will not be decided tonight, among other reasons because the translators have no intention of staying past midnight.

Day 10

THE Cubans, the chief sponsors of resolution 142, have offered a concession. In order to get their resolution passed by consensus —the pinnacle of diplomatic triumph here—they have agreed to withdraw the paragraph mentioning Israel. This would seem to remove the major source of controversy. The Americans, however, now raise their hands to object to several other paragraphs, containing some of the wilder language about South Africa. The British and other Western allies join them. The Cubans are incensed over this ingratitude; they have yielded a prize card—Israel—and got in return a request for still more concessions.

There are, to be sure, ways of dealing with ingratitude when you are the ruling majority. Cuba announces it is withdrawing its concession and calling for the original resolution to be put to a vote. The Americans protest. The British protest. The Australians argue that since apartheid is such an important issue it would be well to offer an anti-apartheid resolution sufficiently unobjectionable that one could vote for it. Zambia, no longer genial, shouts back, "Where is consensus? Where is consensus?" Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and Uganda add their voices to calls for an immediate vote. The Australians remember that 142 is being voted on out of order; the Americans demand a vote by roll call.

None of this is to any avail, since the resolution sponsors have the strength to win by the same margin that will be mustered for all votes of consequence: the Arab-Third World-Communist bloc 42, the West 17 or 18. The Mexicans, concerned, possibly, with the effect on their tourist trade (they have more to worry about than they know, this being just two days before the fall of the peso), get up to explain that although they have voted for the resolution they would have preferred to vote for the amended version (the one not mentioning Israel).

We are confronted next with draft resolution 19, on Culture and National Sovereignty, which proposes that the conference condemn colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, and Zionism. It, too, passes easily. I ask Ambassador X what became of the move to insert the word "totalitarianism" in the litany of crimes deserving condemnation, and receive, in return, a thin smile.

Days 11 and 12

I HAVE been sitting in Commission One, which meets concurrently with Commission Two, and to which the heavier political agenda seems to have been assigned. From the news coming in from Commission Two, and from the exultant jeering that arises from the Arab, Communist, and Third World representatives each time it is Israel's turn to cast its voice vote, it is clear that the real business of the conference is at last under way. For the past week there have been rumors about various resolutions to be directed against Israel; all of these rumors turn out to be well-founded. One of the more notable is Resolution 151, which asks condemnation of Israel on the grounds, among others (including genocide), that "the fanatic concept of the theocratic state of Israel together with the cultural exclusiveness of the Zionist people makes it impossible to tolerate a non-Jewish people in the land of Palestine." The government of Iran, known the world over for its devotion to the principles of secular democracy and pluralism, is the chief sponsor. Resolution 151 passes.

Resolution 126 is no less successful. This vote takes place during the evening session. Commission members have agreed that, because the number of proposals still to be voted on is so great, they will in the interests of efficiency confine themselves only to noncontroversial resolutions—thus leaving more time tomorrow to deal with the others. A number of delegates have promptly left, under the impression that no action touching on any serious matters will be effected. The Arabs thereupon introduce resolution 126 which asserts that UNESCO should

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assist the PLO in the publication of a cultural history of the Palestinian people since "Palestinian culture in the occupied territories is being subjected to systematic falsification and alienation." There are objections from Israeli and Western delegations (the few still remaining in the room) that this is precisely the sort of resolution which, it had been agreed, would *not* be taken up tonight. The Arab-Third World-Communist bloc declares that there is nothing in this resolution which can be called controversial, and passes it.

Resolution 150, submitted by Greece, Tunisia, Pakistan, and the like, recommends that the Old City of Jerusalem and its ramparts be included on the UNESCO List of World Heritages in Danger. For the first time, the United States stands alone, with Israel, in voting no: the other Western allies, including those who have voted most consistently against resolutions targeting Israel, abstain.

In Commission Two, the Americans proffer a mildly worded draft resolution recommending that munitions and war materiel not be stored in or around cultural institutions, mosques, churches, schools. The Arab-Communist-Third World bloc, interpreting this, correctly, as aimed at the PLO in Lebanon, responds with a storm of indignation. The Americans withdraw the resolution after both the bloc countries and one or two Western allies warn that the entire conference may collapse if the effort to bring this proposal to a vote persists.

In Commission One, in the meantime, they are passing draft resolution 51. This resolution, whose title, "Culture and Society: Cultural Identity and Intercultural Relations, Specificity and Universality of Cultural Values," reflects a certain determination not to ignore the official theme of the conference, states that certain peoples suffer because of "colonialist, imperialist, and Zionist aggression," and recommends, therefore, "elimination of all the manifestations" of cultural alienation and of "visible or hidden ideological penetration," and "rejection of any new form of colonialism including Zionist colonialism and racial discrimination."

I LEAVE the voting session—there is a day more left, the outcome a foregone conclusion—to catch a plane back to New York. On the way out I see in the hall the NGO delegate to whom I owe the information that children is what this conference is all about. I ask her if she is waiting for them to get to the part about children. She ignores this comment but takes its spirit, observing that no experience can be all bad or all good.

It does not seem necessary to dispute the question now. Across the street from the conference center, a gang of men are laboriously painting over the huge sign declaring Israel a lackey of U.S. imperialism.

I head for a taxi and the hotel where, from the lobby, I can see the same sight I have seen every day here, the hordes of Mexicans lined up across the street in front of the American embassy. The primary message of the UNESCO conference has apparently not yet reached these citizens, who—oblivious to the dangers of life in a vile and decadent imperialist culture—stand in queues from early morning till evening waiting for the visas that will get them into the United States.

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The Worm in the Big Apple

John P. Sisk

In Europe my wife and I were always aware that we were moving about in a violent world where kidnappings, purse snatchings, knee-cappings, bombings, and assassinations were as common as soccer matches, but it was always a media-based awareness; none of it touched us personally. With no sense of menace we walked the day and night streets of Rome, Florence, Venice, Paris, London, and Dublin. When an Oregon dentist we met in the Vatican post office warned us about the perils of the Eternal City (the attempted assassination of the Pope having happened within the week) we thought he was a bit paranoid.

Thus it was without apprehension that we began to plan for a trip to New York. We supposed that it had its share of the violence that everyone knows is endemic to American cities, but like the currency, it would be something we were familiar with. I even thought of booking quarters in the Piccadilly Hotel on 45th Street, where in the heart of the theater district I had spent happy times during World War II. Then New York seemed a haven from all that was unpleasant or menacing: an enclave of delight from which one returned to the grimmer, bloodier, or more boring business from which one had been all too briefly furloughed. After my last visit I lived for a while in the jungles of British Guiana (now Guyana). The conviction that I would in due time return to my haven on 45th Street helped to sustain me in a place in which only a madman like the late Reverend Jim Jones could see utopian possibilities.

As we began our homework it quickly became clear that 45th Street was out. A special February issue of *New York* magazine devoted to protecting oneself against crime announced that "it's time for New Yorkers to deal with the reality of life on our precarious streets," and went on to detail the menaces that lay in wait for us on the street, in the subways, in Central Park, in the parking lot, in the lobby, in the elevator, in the apartment. Nicholas Pileggi's article, "Meet the Muggers," in a subsequent issue increased our uneasiness. We learned from Adam Smith in *Esquire* that New York had 1,814 murders in 1980, three times as many as all of Canada and ten times as many as Tokyo, and that the white-collar class had become a flock of pigeons to the more violent members of what Ken Auletta was calling the underclass. Apparently there was a worm in the Big Apple. We wondered if it wouldn't be wiser to go back to Europe and the more familiar threats of the IRA, the Red Brigades, and the motor-scooter purse snatchers.

In the end, however, we went to New York, and as a result of a shared taxi ride from LaGuardia airport passed by the Dakota where the late John Lennon had lived and violently died. It looked as peaceful as the neighborhood of our own apartment. Down on 55th Street, five floors below us, women of all ages walked confidently alone even after dark, apparently never having read Nicholas Pileggi or Adam Smith. Sometimes in the middle of the night a horse cab would go clip-clopping along the empty street, as if the cabbie were taking his fares (lovers, no doubt) through a time warp where clocks and death had no dominion.

Nevertheless, the world around us remained violent, as everyone agreed. Central America was in turmoil; Great Britain and Argentina were battling over the Falklands; the Israelis were going after the PLO in Lebanon; Ayatollah Khomeini was vigorously pursuing his holy war with Iraq; terrible things continued to happen to Solidarity in Poland; the soccer world was anticipating that the World Cup matches would be, as usual, a continuation of war by other means; Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* was telling us once more that our lives ride on a nuclear hair-trigger; and over in New Jersey taxicab drivers were trying to get permission to carry guns.

Whatever violence is, most people appeared to assume, like Tolstoy and Gandhi, that we would be better off if we had less of it and best off if we had none of it, as if it were evil itself. This bias was being given support by the National Institute of Mental Health, which had just released a much-commented-on ninety-four page report claiming scientific evidence for a cause and effect connection between TV violence and violence in the playground and on the street. *Newsweek* was wondering whether we might not be breeding a nation of mild paranoiacs. In the New York *Times* Tony Schwartz, blaming the violence on the priority the

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networks place on commercial success, conceded that "violence has a place in drama, but unnecessary violence does not." Unnecessary violence included "gratuitous" violence, "designed to arouse a reaction, rather than advance a story legitimately" and excessive in that its level is "out of proportion to ordinary experience."

It is this excessiveness, this lack of apparent proportionality, that leads us to speak of meaningless violence. Adam Smith, who gives two frightening examples of such excessive violence in Manhattan (murders that had nothing to do with the success of the robberies), quotes Charles Silberman's *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice*: the new thing is that people "kill, maim, and injure without reason or remorse." For many people the murder of John Lennon is more disturbing than killings by the IRA or the Red Brigades: the latter announce reasons we can understand even if we cannot sympathize with their causes. What is more natural, more human, than to kill those who stand between you and ideal justice? Indeed, one of the great attractions of psychiatry is its promise to translate apparently meaningless violence into everyday daylight terms and thus humanize it—even to enrich the translation with optional meanings, as the trial of John Hinckley was then demonstrating. This means, of course, that few psychiatrists would agree with Silberman's statement. Adam Smith gives as an example of a senseless murder a mugger's killing of a young attorney because "I don't like your face." If we gave the mugger the psychiatric in-depth reading we have learned to give poems and novels, his stated reason for the killing might appear both understandable and proportionate; we might even learn to give him that measure of sympathy we give the violent killers in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, the Bonanno family in Gay Talese's *Honor Thy Father*, or Steve Rojack in Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*.

ONE NIGHT, after returning scatheless from a walk through the lower regions of Central Park, we watched a TV interview with Arnold Schwarzenegger, the former Mr. Universe and now the star of *Conan the Barbarian*, the subject of a tumultuous preview at the Rivoli theater some weeks before we arrived on the scene. He seemed a pleasant and physically impressive young man, just the sort of companion with whom one might go safely anywhere in Central Park. His Conan is a very violent person in a very violent movie. "The narrative is so lumpy," *New York* magazine said, "that only the violence will keep the audience involved." Arnold himself, however, clearly believed that the violence in the movie was neither excessive nor meaningless. In *Conan* blood spurts and detached heads fly as the hero encounters very wicked adversaries who stand between him and the vengeance he seeks for a monstrous wrong. Certainly he proves out the movie's Nietzschean epigraph—that which does not destroy us makes us strong; perhaps more important, to quote David Anthony Kraft in the Marvel comic-book treatment of the movie, he "informs us about ourselves, including our darker nature." Given the extent to which we now insist that authentic fiction and drama give us information about our lower nature (our higher nature being hopelessly compromised by hypocrisies and verbal fictions), that puts *Conan* in some pretty fast company.

It also puts the movie in the company of fairy stories, and Kraft might have quoted Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* in defense of his contention that the violence in *Conan* serves a serious and even didactic purpose. Certainly, like the fairy stories about which Bettelheim writes so perceptively, it connects with our common fantasy-heritage by way of a story that puts justice before charity as it uses violence for purposes of hyperbolical clarification. Modeling virtues familiar to readers of epic literature (to say nothing of soccer fans), it teaches how to cope in extreme adversative circumstances. Conan, in fact, is in complete agreement with Jonathan Schell's much-quoted remark: "Two paths lie before us. One leads to death, the other to life"—which may indicate that there is a powerful element of heroic fantasy in Schell's book. It is quite possible that *Conan* caters less to our appetite for violence than to our appetite for situations in which either/or solutions are indisputably necessary—as they are in the new space game, Star Strike, in which in the comfort of your living room you must "destroy the enemy planet, before it destroys the earth." *Conan*, in fact, gives comfort not only by depicting but predicting melodrama—that is, the continuation of a world that is neither boring nor overcomplicated. Of course, either/or formulations depend on an extreme censoring of information (necessary for the child, Bettelheim points out) that makes violent consequences likely. This may be why some readers find it hard to reconcile Schell's book with his hopes for a peaceful world.

On the wall of the lobby in the Museum of Natural History we saw a quotation from Theodore Roosevelt that begins: "I want to see you game boys, I want to see you brave and manly" and ends, "Character in the long run is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike." Roosevelt, who believed with Shakespeare's good Duke in *As You Like It* that "sweet are the uses of adversity," would have understood and appreciated Conan, and perhaps Star Strike as well. Conan would have been good to have around for the violent business of San Juan Hill, and surely would have agreed with Roosevelt that the nearly disastrous escapade was a "bully fight" and "great fun." Conan has character, the organization of personality that makes possible the concentration of available powers for significant and, if necessary, violent action. He measures up well against Roosevelt's standard of self-reliance. Like the young mugger whom Adam Smith quotes (and who too might have been useful at San Juan Hill), he likes to support himself.

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MEANWHILE, the *Village Voice* was reporting on the self-supporting activities of those two ex-jailbirds, Timothy Leary and G. Gordon Liddy, who had recently brought their cross-country debate to New York University and the Beacon theater on the Upper West Side. To many in his audience, Liddy was a classic example of the extent to which character formation can concentrate power for not only violent but anti-individualist purposes. Apparently, four and a half years in prison had strengthened his spirit just as Conan's many brutal years on the mill wheel in the land of the Vanir had strengthened his. Like Schell, he was a "two-paths" man. He too would have been useful at San Juan Hill, where strength of character combined with a capacity for hugger-mugger would have been especially useful. When he told the Beacon theater audience that we "don't give the police enough freedom," Leary called him a Neanderthal—oddly enough, since in Leary's perspective the Neanderthal, not yet having been ruined in the prison of civilization, deserved a less pejorative context.

Leary himself may have more character than he is generally given credit for (after all, he has survived the experience of thirty-nine jails on four continents) but he had little good to say for it. In the Leary lexicon character is associated with the Protestant ethic and the second law of thermodynamics (the law of entropy) which combine to put in shackles the perfect brain of the child, who is then capable of doing society's violent dirty work with the best will in the world. To him traditional character structure is a Mafia, as is an army, a police force, or a government, and if you wish to learn the extent to which the power concentrated in such human systems is actually a form of pernicious violence all you have to do is oppose them. Like Tolstoy, he believes that laws make the criminal. Leary would have been no good at all at San Juan Hill; indeed, he would be about as compatible with Roosevelt as he actually was with Eldridge Cleaver when those two met in North Africa some years ago and discovered that they had little more in common than the fact that they were both fugitives.

Of course, when Leary takes his stand in a materialistically tantalizing world against what he conceives the Protestant ethic to be (a means of delaying pleasure), he moves close to some very violent people. In Pileggi's account of street crime in New York, for instance, a detective says of young muggers: "They must be satisfied immediately or they can get very mean. The things they see on television they can never earn enough to buy, and they must go out and get the money any way they can." Such people are as little impressed as Leary is by the Protestant ethic and the law of entropy, and just as likely to define all authority structures as Mafias. Certainly they would endorse the statement he made to his Beacon audience in defense of his use of drugs: "I refuse to permit any government to tell me how to arrange my moods." Of course, Leary could counter (and no doubt has many times) that when the Mafia authorities oppose his quite reasonable and even highly moral preferences they are simply displaying the invalidating violence with which such authorities sustain themselves—and if his words or conduct happen to give comfort to counter-Mafias, the consequences, if any, are ultimately their fault, not his.

ONE MORNING we visited the Morgan Library, the memorial of a man who for Leary surely belongs in the Mafia class. There, beside a picture of the great financier, is a portrait of John Milton at age ten, a pretty young man who in time would write an epic sufficiently filled with meaningful violence to satisfy Conan's most ardent admirers. The problem is how to interpret it. Looked at one way, the author of *Paradise Lost* is a law-and-order man who favors Leary's detested Mafias. Looked at another way, it is possible to say what Blake says in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was of the Devil's party without knowing it." What better and more paradoxical line to take in defense of the individual against the violent lusts of established Mafias? Leary, the cosmic and psychedelic utopian, believing that "We can go as far as we want to," might find in Blake a Milton he can build a future on.

Blake, to whom paradox was as strategically important as it was to Rousseau, also said: "Without contraries is no progression"—a good remark to have in mind when, as we did one beautiful morning, the tourist views the statue (the gift of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) on the grounds outside the United Nations buildings. Here a nearly nude green giant is frozen in the act of beating on a huge and already buckled sword. These words are on the pedestal: "We will beat our swords into plowshares." The well-muscled and violently engaged figure suggests Conan even if his action does not. Conan, we are told at the end of the movie, in time became a king by his own hand, and in that hand, we may be sure, was his trusty and still intact sword. But Conan was not a utopian, and what the statue dramatizes is the utopianism at the heart of Marxism (and at the heart of so much of our thinking about violence as well). Shelley, in whose poetry violent means are so often the necessary preliminary to permanent idyllic and loving conclusions (see, for instance, *Hellas* and *Prometheus Unbound*), probably would have approved of it.

It was good to look at the Soviet statue with Vladimir Bukovsky's essay in the May COMMENTARY, "The Peace Movement and the Soviet Union," in mind. Bukovsky spent twelve years in Soviet prisons; most likely the green giant would have suggested to him the paradox of the Soviet direction of the 1980 World Peace Council in Sofia, where, said *Izvestia* in one of its Shelleyesque moods, "The first bright colors have already touched the emerald green parks" and the "golden leaves of maples and aspens are trembling in the

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breeze." Bukovsky also quotes Lenin's formula for peace—"As an ultimate objective peace simply means Communist world control"—and reminds us that "while comrade Chicherin, at the conference of Genoa in 1922, was appealing to the entire world for total and immediate disarmament, crowds of bewildered people in the Soviet Union were marching to a song that began: 'We'll fan the worldwide flame, / Churches and prisons we'll raze to the ground.' " Bukovsky might prompt one to think that the green giant, being a practical pacifist, is beating not on his own sword but on that of his adversary, where all the evil is located.

The Soviet statue was also a good place to contemplate the paradoxical toleration of violence by some of the major pacifist organizations, particularly as that toleration was being presented in the June *American Spectator* by Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac. The Isaacs are impressed with the gap between pacifist rhetoric and reality in the attitude toward the PLO of the American Friends Service Committee, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the War Resisters League. They remind us that in 1975 the World Peace Council gave the medal for peace to Yasir Arafat, and that War Resisters League President Norma Becker is in favor of overturning all our institutions "because unless these institutions are eradicated it doesn't seem likely that we will be in a position to really practice nonviolence." The anarchist Bakunin seems to be implied here, and Leary as well, to say nothing of those members of the Red Brigades recently tried in Rome for having demonstrated the economy of "proletarian justice" by their murder of Aldo Moro: get rid of all establishment Mafias and the world's great age will begin anew.

Bertrand Russell, who once believed that "the government of New York City was virtually a satellite of the Vatican" and who too had been a jailbird, might have found the Red Brigades a bit uncouth, but he could propose equally extreme solutions: advocating, for instance, that while the United States still had a monopoly on atomic weapons it should use them as a threat to secure worldwide disarmament. He also was a practical pacifist. Like all of his kind he might have been useful at San Juan Hill once he was persuaded that after that conquest there would be no more hills to storm up.

The Isaacs were good at helping us see the semantics of this paradox. They refer to A. J. Muste's radical conception of pacifism in his 1928 essay "Pacifism and Class War," in which he argues that since 90 percent of the world's violence is what maintains the status quo, it is "ludicrous" to urge "rebels against repression" to use nonviolent means. This way out of what is otherwise a dilemma involves not only a distinction between the honorific and pejorative senses in which the term "violence" is used, but a tendency not to use it at all when energy or force in whatever magnitude is being used for approved purposes. Members of the U.S. Peace Council are not likely to see the logo on their official literature (a dove shaped into a clenched fist) as a symbol of violence. For true believers, the Soviet green giant is not depicted in a violent act; he is exerting his considerable virtuous energies against violence. "Violence" has become a dirty word, and to judge from the full-page ad we saw in the New York *Times* for the June 12 National Mobilization for Survival in Central Park ("Abolish Nuclear Weapons Now"), its adequate synonym for a vast number of people is nuclear energy, which in the context of the ad translates as nuclear violence.

Bukovsky calls our attention to an analogous distinction between just and unjust war. Just wars are those fought "in the interest of the proletariat" and "are absolutely justifiable because they lead to the creation of a world in which there will be no more wars, forevermore." No wonder that Marxism-Leninism has always been suspected of being a secularized version of biblical fundamentalism. A just war is like that terminal conflict expected by apocalyptic Christians, after which, as William Martin was pointing out in the June *Atlantic*, the faithful redeemed will enjoy a new heaven and a new earth. Thus will that *caporegima* of all Mafias, Satan, finally be disposed of. Unfortunately, such a scenario, when read against the history of Western civilization since the Enlightenment, can only remind one of all those Mafias of virtue militant that with a noble ruthlessness aimed at a heaven on earth that would make heaven itself seem jejune.

CONAN the Barbarian, however, is not only pre-Enlightenment but pre-civilization, and in his movie, as is generally the case in the literature and drama of barbarism, civilization gets a bad press. Such rudimentary civilization as we see, which the audience is no doubt expected to take as an adequate symbol of the civilization it knows, is represented as an effete, demoralized, power-corrupted, and imprisoning place—as easily victimized by a Thulsa Doom as the ramshackle Left was by the Reverend Jim Jones. Conan's world view, like that of Star Strike, is not cluttered up with the ambiguities and paradoxes of power, which is a great source of its attractiveness. His morale is high because he can with singleness of mind use the power available to him. Therefore he is free, whereas civilized man is fettered and easily persuaded to agree with Rousseau in his *Second Discourse*: "When I see multitudes of entirely naked savages scorn European voluptuousness and endure hunger, fire, the sword, and death to preserve only their independence, I feel that it does not behoove slaves to reason about freedom."

Rousseau's ideas about savage life may sound now as if he had early access to and never recovered from Edgar Rice Burroughs, but they have proven influential over the years, in great part because the paradoxical discontents of civilization can still be interpreted as he interpreted them. Utopia is a dream of discontented civilization. Unfortunately, every attempt to realize it has been frustrated be-

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cause of the very ambiguities and paradoxes of power responsible for the discontents. Hence, no doubt, the appeal of that great pseudo-utopian resource, our darker nature, where power, whether or not defined as violence, can be experienced and enjoyed with an undivided mind.

This, we suspected, was the way it was being experienced in that private fantasy lounge on 54th Street (Live Adult Entertainment—25 Dancers-Hostesses—Free Adult Movies), an ad for which was thrust into our hands every time we came by the corner of Sixth Avenue and 55th Street. And then there was that other fantasy world we walked gingerly through one Sunday afternoon: my old neighborhood around Times Square, where perhaps it was still possible for true believers to imagine that the Protestant ethic and the law of entropy had been canceled, whether or not to Leary's satisfaction, and still possible to accept the Marquis de Sade's paradox that the violence of pornography was the one true way to overcome established Mafias and arrive at utopia. Sade, like Lenin, had a program for a peaceful universe in which the violence of Star Strike would be so patently meaningless that not even children would play it (which may be why French intellectuals with a paradoxical turn of mind, like Michel Foucault, have tended to treat him so respectfully). Perhaps too in a dull time for orgasmic liberationists Sade could take some comfort from the fact that at the Edison theater up on 47th Street *Oh! Calcutta!*, that *Abie's Irish Rose* of the skin trade, was after these many years still celebrating an erotic black mass once every weekday and twice on Sunday.

There was a time when Bertrand Russell saw some possibilities in Lenin's program, but that time was past when he came to write about Orwell after the latter's death. On that occasion he distinguished himself and Orwell from people like H. G. Wells who did not know that "sensible people have no power." When, following the repeated failure of utopian expectations, this conviction is reinforced by the conviction that all power corrupts (not "tends" to corrupt, as Lord Acton wrote), demoralization and despair are the routine consequences. Too many people then begin to suspect that to insist that the good society be without violence is to insist that it be without power and in love with entropy. "All weakness tends to corrupt," Edgar Z. Friedenberg once wrote, "and impotence corrupts absolutely." If he is right, it is easy to suspect that Jonathan Schell's "sensible" book is on the side of entropy (which, according to Leary's utopian physics, is a thing of the past). Conan, at any rate, acts as if he agrees with Friedenberg.

Occasionally, as we wandered about our apparently peaceful neighborhood, we passed a videogames arcade on Broadway. How sensible were those young people, I wondered, as in fantasy they manipulated great power in violent games? Perhaps the attraction of the arcade was that it was a Conan-like fairy-story world where power could be exercised with great clarity of purpose and high morale: in a place of enchantment locked away from the paradoxes and ambiguities of discontented civilization where it was possible to prove out on one's pulses the truth of Blake's words: "Energy is Eternal Delight." If boredom is the bedfellow of entropy, the video warriors were in an anti-entropic "two paths" enclave, as delighted as Teddy Roosevelt was at San Juan Hill. Perhaps such a place should be read, Bettelheim-fashion, as an anthology of animated fairy stories in which adolescents are taught a lesson without which adult life would be utterly demoralizing: that no matter how technologically sophisticated the world becomes we will continue to be preoccupied with the age-old themes and adversative circumstances, so that, as in *Star Trek*, it will continue to be possible for sensible people to use power wisely. No doubt, many of the warriors, having become expert at fighting off invaders from outer space, would later show up at the Central Park Mobilization to fight for peace.

A LITTLE farther south on Broadway, where in the Winter Garden Shakespeare's *Othello* was teaching more disturbing lessons, it was possible to see James Earl Jones, who had fared so badly as Thulsa Doom in *Conan*, be a loser again as the bedeviled Moor. Iago is not of course Bertrand Russell's sensible man as he wields his great power to violent ends; indeed, to us he might seem the epitome of a demoralizing malignity at the very heart of things—as if, analogously, he were technology run wild. So we are tempted, as readers and audiences have always been, to see Othello as an Everyman-loser hopelessly outmaneuvered in the power-corrupted world.

But the play will not let us off that easily, especially when an actor as powerful as Christopher Plummer plays Iago. Othello is not only, as Iago says, "egregiously an ass," but he is woefully ignorant of that darkness within himself, that lower nature about which our culture was in time to entertain such utopian and ultimately disillusioning expectations. He is much more tragically an ass when he insists that Desdemona define herself clearly either as "one entire and perfect chrysolite" or as a whore, as if they both belonged in the world of the Soviet green giant, or with Conan the Barbarian in the Hyborian Age.

But what is *Othello* now if not what it has always been: a harrowing dramatic statement about the violent consequences of trying to resolve a complex human situation so absolutely and in such unshaded terms that time will not undo the solution? It is the right play for a time bedeviled with an overload of information and uncertain about the identity of its Iagos. Yet harrowing as it is, there may be some comfort in it for those lovers of New York who are unhappy with the reputation of their beautiful city as an especially violent place. To them the play says that the worm in the Big Apple may simply be the worm in the world.

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Appropriating the Holocaust

Henryk Grynberg

THE Holocaust must have been a great shock to Christian consciousness. Why else would Pope John XXIII have cried out—as he is said to have done—"Forgive us for crucifying Thee a second time in their flesh"? Why else would the Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland have passed a resolution declaring Christianity responsible for the Holocaust and nullifying former Church doctrine that the Jewish people have been rejected by God and replaced by the Church? As the German theologian, Heinz Kremers, has written: "The Holocaust signifies the crisis of our civilization, our culture, our policy, and our religion. Six million people have been murdered by the heirs of Christendom for no other reason than the fact that they were Jews."

That such a burden of guilt should evoke resistance in the minds of the "heirs of Christendom" is not surprising. Nor is it surprising that the Jews, still in a state of shock, should have been fearful for so long of admitting openly who it was they deemed guilty of this crime. So the blame was put instead on abstractions like fascism, racism, or totalitarianism. The plain fact that the Holocaust was prepared and caused by Christian anti-Semitism, that Christendom in effect made the Jews the chosen people for the Holocaust, was just too difficult to face. That is why, as the Protestant theologian Franklin H. Littell has noted, "for years, except for a few poets, novelists, and memoirists, neither Jews nor Christians could bear to talk about the event." Rather, both sides tried their best to forget. When this proved impossible, at least for the Jews, a peculiar process of avoidance got under way.

The universalization, trivialization, and general blurring of outline of the Holocaust which we see today on all sides can perhaps best be viewed as a kind of unconscious defense mechanism. For Christians, it is a defense against guilt; for Jews, against fear. In both cases, it is a way of avoiding the awful particularity of this event. Thus, many Christians and even some Jews today accept the notion that the Jews should not be singled out as particular victims of the Holocaust, that they were only one group—albeit the hardest hit—among a number of other groups also killed by the Nazis. If this version of the Holocaust becomes the historically accepted one, we shall have collaborated in the perpetration of a second Big Lie, as heinous as the first, and this even after that second crucifixion of which Pope John spoke.

One factor obscuring the truth about the Holocaust is the confusion in terminology which has bedeviled this subject from the beginning. An example of such confusion is the continual use of the term "concentration camps" in connection with the Holocaust, as though the two were synonymous. Since the concentration camps did in fact contain inmates of many different religions and nationalities, it is only logical to conclude, as many have, that the Jewish case was only a more extreme instance of a catastrophe which befell many other nationalities and religions as well.

The truth is, however, that the largest part of Europe's Jews perished not in concentration camps but in extermination camps, and German terminology—with its distinction between *Konzentrationslagern* and *Vernichtungs-* or *Sonderlagern*—is very clear on this point. Those Jews who did not die in the death camps died either in closed ghettos, where they were systematically starved (Warsaw, Cracow, Lodz), or else in mass executions carried out in places like Babi Yar, Ponary, Dubno, and other points in the German-occupied Soviet territorities. What the murder installations have in common is that they were designated exclusively for Jews.

To clarify this distinction once and for all, Treblinka (where 750,000 people perished), Belzec (600,000), Chelmno (360,000), and Sobibor (250,000) were strictly extermination camps, while Maidanek, with 200,000 victims, was both a concentration camp and an extermination camp. The same is true of Auschwitz, the most infamous of all. What the visitor who enters Auschwitz through the gate bearing the inscription *"Arbeit macht frei"* sees is Auschwitz I, the concentration camp, which housed 405,000 registered and numbered prisoners of different nationalities, including Jews; 340,000 of those inmates died here. But

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about a mile and a half away is another camp—Auschwitz II, also known as Birkenau (in German) and Brzezinka (in Polish). This was the extermination camp of Auschwitz, where about 3,500,000 people were gassed.

According to the testimony of Rudolf Hoess at the Nuremberg trials, except for 20,000 Russian prisoners of war, people gassed during his term as commandant of Auschwitz were "Jews from Holland, Belgium, France, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Greece, and other countries." They were never registered or numbered, and in a sense they never became real prisoners. They were taken to the gas chambers almost straight from the train, following a quick selection process which separated out the younger and healthier adults and the taller teen-agers. These were directed to the concentration-camp work force, where they had the chance, if not ultimately to survive, then at least to live a while longer.

The extermination camps, unlike the concentration camps, were never "liberated"—the liberators came too late. While there are thousands of survivors of the concentration camps, many of whom have written accounts of their experiences, the extermination camps left virtually no survivors, and almost nothing in the way of eyewitness testimony. I myself, for example, am technically a kind of "survivor" of the death camp of Treblinka, but that is only because my parents managed to run away with me before we were loaded onto the train—the rest of my family was murdered. Under these circumstances, it is all too easy to speak only of concentration camps, and let the mute death camps fade into oblivion.

Finally, in listing the differences between the concentration camps and the death camps, it is important to point out that the former were not a Nazi invention. They are one more instance, if a particularly grisly one, of the institution of concentration-camp slavery, which has existed in one form or other throughout the history of mankind. In our own century, the Bolsheviks were the first to set up these camps on a mass scale—shortly after their seizure of power—and the death rate in the Soviet Gulag was probably as high as that in the Nazi concentration camps. The extermination camps, by contrast, are a true Nazi invention, devised exclusively for the murder of Jews. The official Polish encyclopedia, on the basis of evidence gathered by the Commission on Nazi War Crimes, states that 5,660,000 people were killed in death camps, as opposed to 1,500,000 in concentration camps; the same source states that 99 percent of those murdered in death camps were Jews, and 1 percent were Gypsies.

To say this is not to minimize the other crimes perpetrated during World War II: the mass execution of 10,000 Polish army officers by the Soviets (4,000 in the Katyn forest) or the death of 3 million Soviet POW's who were simply kept by the Germans in open barbed-wire enclosures without food or water. What distinguishes these enormous crimes from the Holocaust, however, is the fact that although the number of victims involved may be unique to the 20th century, the crimes themselves are not. They are typical war crimes, perpetrated by armies throughout the centuries. But the Holocaust was not a war crime. It had no connection with any military operation or strategic situation. There was absolutely no military reason for the Jews' internment—the course of the war would not have changed if they had been left in peace. Indeed, as has been pointed out, the exigencies first of rounding up, then of transporting, then of guarding, then of killing so many millions of people probably impeded the German war effort and may well have hastened the German defeat.

To deny that what was done to the Jews of Poland, the Ukraine, and Lithuania during the years 1941-45 was a unique event in the history of evil is to acknowledge it as somehow within the range of normal human experience, and hence to accept, if not to sanction, it as a part of "the human condition." Those who universalize the Holocaust are not enlarging its significance but rather reducing it.

Curiously, this mistake is made even by otherwise enlightened and well-intentioned individuals. Thus, Czeslaw Milosz in his Stockholm lecture after accepting the Nobel Prize in literature, made eloquent reference to the Holocaust. But then he added that he feared for the gradual transformation of this word "so that it begins to belong in the history of only the Jews, as if there were no other nationalities who became victims of the crime." Milosz is right in saying there were other nationalities besides the Jews who became victims of crime during World War II, but they did not become victims of the Holocaust. Millions of Jews too have been victims of crime throughout history, but only in the years 1941-45 did they become victims of the Holocaust. Both Milosz and I lived in Warsaw in the spring of 1943, for example, but while my chance of surviving was one in a thousand, though I was just a six-year-old, there was nothing remarkable in the survival of a non-Jewish child who happened to live there at the time.

Even at the site of Auschwitz itself, this distinction has been blurred. Visitors to Auschwitz today are greeted by an imposing memorial monument (to the "Martyrdom of Nations") and an international exhibit with pavilions representing an array of nations whose citizens perished in the camps. Russia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Belgium—even East Germany—have their own exhibits here, but it was not until 1978 that Polish authorities allowed a Jewish pavilion to be added to this international martyrdom festival—notwithstanding the fact that 90 percent of all those killed in Auschwitz (both Auschwitz I and II) were Jews.

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When Pope John Paul II made his celebrated visit to Auschwitz in 1979, he enumerated some twenty languages in which the commemorative plaques were written. He referred to the inscriptions on these plaques as "languages of the victims of this Golgotha" and went on to say that these plaques "testify to the losses suffered by the nations." But in fact those plaques testify only to the different *languages* spoken by the victims, who were predominantly of *one* nationality—Jewish.

The Pope himself acknowledged the Jews as a nationality when, standing before the Hebrew plaque, he said: "This inscription commemorates a nation, whose sons and daughters had been destined for total extermination." He acknowledged it a second time when he said: "This nation traces its origin back to Abraham, who was the father of our faith." Finally, he called the Jews a nation for the third time when he said: "This nation which received from God the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' experienced a particular measure of killings." Yet when he stood before the Polish plaque the Pope said: "Six million Poles died during the last war, one-fifth of a nation." While it is certainly true that those 3 million Polish Jews exterminated by the Nazis were a loss to the Polish nation, simple justice requires us to remember that the majority of Poles did not consider them part of the Polish nation while they were alive, or when they were dying their Jewish death.

In Communist-ruled Poland there are of course "ideological" reasons for this distortion of reality. But there is also a more general misunderstanding about the Holocaust which goes all the way back to the Nuremberg trials when the Holocaust—mistakenly, in my opinion—was subsumed under the category of "genocide," and defined as a "crime against humanity." Genocide is, to be sure, a crime against humanity, but it has existed almost as long as humanity itself, as a reading of the Pentateuch will show. Very few nations have not been touched by genocide at some time in their history, either as perpetrators or as victims. But the Holocaust was more than genocide. As the Christian scholars Alice L. Eckardt and A. Roy Eckardt have written, there is a "difference between forcible, even murderous, denationalization, and wholesale, total murder of every one of the members of a community." Unlike prior attempts in time of war to root out national groups, "the Holocaust was a policy of the total, sacral Nazi act of mass murder of all the Jews they could lay their hands on." The Eckardts point out that contrary to general belief, there never was a Nazi policy to apply the measures used against the Jews to other national communities. While some nationalities were called inferior in Nazi terminology, the Jews were considered "not human at all." The Holocaust, in short, was directed not against humanity, but against the Jews, and it should therefore be called a crime against the Jews.

THE consequences of failing to observe this distinction in terminology can be seen very clearly in the report prepared by the President's Commission on the Holocaust, the special group convened by President Carter in 1978, and headed by Elie Wiesel, to offer recommendations concerning a memorial to Holocaust victims in the United States. To begin with, the report insisted on "the uniqueness of the Holocaust" as one of its "guiding principles." It then went on to describe the Holocaust with admirable specificity as "a systematic, bureaucratic extermination of 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state." But no sooner was this definition established than the document proceeded to undermine it with rhetorical concessions like the following: "As night descended, millions of other peoples were swept into this net of death."

Now this statement, dramatic though it is, is absolutely false. The death of those "millions of others" had nothing to do with "this net of death," as the Commission calls the Holocaust; it was a product of the war itself and the savage methods used by the Nazis against all opposition, methods introduced before the Holocaust and independent of it. Those millions of others would have perished in the war even if the Holocaust had never taken place and if the Jews had never existed.

The same confusion in terminology enables the Commission to declare that "Jews might not have remained the final victims of Nazi genocide, but they were certainly the first." This statement is false both because the term genocide does not really cover the Holocaust and because the first victims of Nazi policies were not Jews but Germans confined to institutions for the mentally ill.

While visiting Poland and the Soviet Union, in the course of their research, members of the Commission heard constant lectures from Communist authorities about how "the Jews were not the only ones who suffered" (the same argument used, incidentally, in London and Washington during World War II as an excuse for not mounting a rescue effort). One would hardly expect to find this sentiment emerging from the Commission itself, yet precisely the same point is made in the Commission's recommendations for a proposed Holocaust museum to be set up in Washington: "Since Jews were not the only people to suffer and since others perished for their convictions or affiliations, for their nationality or race, in the machinery of death initially designed for the destruction of Jews, the Commission recommends that the museum incorporate displays on the Poles, the Gypsies, and other exterminated groups." Amazingly enough, this sentence in the report comes right after a firm declaration that "the Jews were Hitler's primary victims against whom the total fury of the Holocaust was unleashed: to dilute or deny this reality would be to falsify it in

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the name of misguided universalism." How can a group of intellectuals and scholars establish in one sentence a reality which should not be diluted, and in the next sentence proceed to dilute it? Is this to be seen perhaps as another instance of the inadequacy, if not worse, of intellectuals in the face of evil, which our political century has documented so abundantly?

THE Commission, after visiting Babi Yar, where the memorial monument fails to mention the Jews at all, professed itself "shocked" by this failure and "alerted to the danger of historical falsification and dilution." Yet there was no protest when the same sort of falsification and dilution occurred at the National Civil Holocaust Ceremony held in Washington on April 24, 1979. President Carter set the tone for the occasion when he told the audience assembled at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda that "We must teach the lesson of the Holocaust," only to add in the next breath, "in the persecution, the suffering, and the destruction which has befallen so many other people in this century, in many nations." Vice President Mondale echoed the President, reminding the audience of the many other nationalities that had suffered in addition to the Jews, and referring in the course of his talk to "11 million innocent victims exterminated—6 million of them Jews." Even Elie Wiesel found it necessary, when he formally delivered the Commission's report to the President a few months later, to affirm that "although all Jews were victims, not all victims were Jews," thereby obeying the unwritten rule which specifies equal rhetorical time for all nationalities on occasions like these. Such techniques contribute to divesting the Holocaust of most of its specific historical meaning and transforming it into a generalized metaphor for the suffering of all mankind.

This kind of evasion is practiced routinely in Communist countries. As Franklin H. Littell (himself a member of the Commission) has pointed out, Soviet authorities continually refer to the 11 million total camp dead, or the 22 million total Russian dead, or the estimated 42 million total losses of life in World War II. Littell deplores this practice of "tossing the sufferings of many peoples during World War II into the same cauldron"—and calls it an "escape mechanism," a way of refusing to confront the significance of the martyrdom of the 6 million.

IT IS hard to understand how people who claim sympathy for the Jewish martyrs and express regret because they were unable to help the Jews during the Holocaust are still unable to recognize the right of the Jewish victims to a separate resting place in human memory. Surely these "sympathizers" are serving no ecumenical purpose by increasing the number of Holocaust victims by 5 or even 20 million. Others, particularly Jews, may have an unacknowledged fear of Jewish isolation, and believe—like Simon Wiesenthal, for example—that to merge the Christian and Jewish dead in a common memorial will bring Jews and Christians together and safeguard the Jews against future catastrophe. My argument against this position is that it is very hard to bridge a separation that has existed for millennia, and it certainly cannot be done by a gesture whose main purpose is to salve the bad conscience of the Gentile world. The Holocaust, which was not shared then, cannot be shared now. After the greatest crime on earth was committed against them, the Jewish people still have a sense of living on sufferance and not by right in this world, which has taken everything from them—religion, property, possessions, life. Now it is trying to appropriate their death as well.

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Shostakovich in Four Parts

Samuel Lipman

When Dmitri Shostakovich died in Moscow seven years ago, he was mourned in his homeland as a great Soviet composer. Behind all the obligatory declarations of faith in the present and future of socialist art lay the unspoken acknowledgment that with Shostakovich's death there had passed away the last great Russian musician worthy of standing with such immortals as Mussorgsky, Tchaikowsky, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev.

The reaction to Shostakovich abroad, both in death and earlier in life, has hardly been so wholehearted. Indeed, it could be said that over a period of nearly sixty years the musical reputation of this prolific writer has functioned as an accurate barometer of wider Western opinion concerning the Soviet Union as an economic, social, political, and military power.

In the 1920's, for example, the bold, brash, and biting works of Shostakovich the student were seen as manifestations of the *élan vital* of the triumphant Bolshevik revolution and its scornful rejection of convention. The energetic First Symphony (1924-25), written before the composer was twenty, and *The Nose* (1927-28), an opera based on a short story by Gogol, satirizing the old Russia of Czar Nicholas I, strengthened the perception of Shostakovich as a new broom sweeping music clean. While bourgeois society in the West was the target of Shostakovich's witty attacks in a ballet, *The Age of Gold* (1927-30), prerevolutionary Russian society again provided the butt for the composer's attacks in *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1930-32), a four-act operatic setting—strongly influenced by Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (1914-21)—of Leskov's tale of rural lust and murder. Successful on their appearance in the USSR, these works quickly became caviar for the enlightened in the West, and Shostakovich's status as one of the leading modernist composers of the day seemed secure.

But what the revolution had given, it could take away, and not just at home but also abroad. The same iconoclastic vitality which had won admirers for Shostakovich all over the musical world won him the enmity of the leading Soviet music critic—the polymath Josef Stalin. Under direct orders from Stalin (and perhaps incorporating his own words of wisdom as well), an article appeared in *Pravda* in 1936 titled "Muddle Instead of Music"; the target was *Lady Macbeth*, which Stalin had just seen and hated. The result was predictable. The opera was withdrawn, as was Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony (1935-36). All of the composer's work now lay under a cloud, and in the gathering fury of the Great Purge, his life itself, and the lives of his family too, must have seemed in peril.

For a time Shostakovich lapsed into a relative musical silence. His answer to the fury, when it came, turned out to be yet another symphony, this time his Fifth, inscribed "A Soviet Artist's Practical, Creative Reply to Just Criticism." Gone was the bitterness of tone, expressed in harsh dissonance and mocking instrumental timbre, which had marked the early Shostakovich. In its place, in consonance with the new aesthetic policy of socialist realism, was an expansive symphony with a happy ending; here was a work portraying the life cycle of Soviet man and, so we are told, appealing to him en masse. At home Shostakovich became the crowned composer laureate, in demand for works and performances as well as for pronouncements on all manner of musical subjects. Film music by the carload came from his facile pen, as did a Sixth Symphony (1939). The film music is now forgotten, and the symphony, true to the demands of Soviet power, is blessed with a last movement described by the American critic David Hall as "straight 'public square' Shostakovich, trivial but enjoyable for all that, winding up with a marching tune that might well accompany a Komsomol parade down Red Square."

However edifying this spectacle of an artist writing music to political order in return for his continued physical safety may have seemed to Stalinists outside Russia, the effect of Shostakovich's musical demarche was an immediate loss of respect among many musical intellectuals. Not only did his capitulation lose Shostakovich all claim to a place in the modernist world of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bartók; those of more traditional tastes, who had been repelled by the stridency of his offenses against "good taste," refused to go along with what they saw as yet another example of the composer's bending to extramusical criteria. Thus, in the 1940 Supplementary Volume of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the great champion of Russian music, M.D. Calvocoressi, moved from a castigation of Shostakovich's now-reviled older music to a laconic rejection of the new: for Calvocoressi, in his earlier works Shostakovich was

> misled by his eagerness to conform to Soviet requirements [and] overshot the mark. . . . [The] Union of Soviet composers took up the matter and blamed the composer for his "formalistic and insincere" methods. He accepted the verdict. . . . He then composed a fifth symphony [which] was described in the Russian press as profoundly significant and free from the errors for which the composer had

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been censured. In Paris it was found disappointing and commonplace.

As IT happened, however, Shostakovich's positive orientation to Soviet reality was to prove in tune both with domestic political and artistic pressures and in a wider sense with the altered state of world affairs brought about by the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. What Stalin had lost in world opinion by his pact with Hitler and his overrunning of small neighboring states was more than recouped when a Russian defeat at the hands of the Nazis seemed imminent.

Into the new climate of patriotism at home and sympathy for the Soviet partner abroad stepped Shostakovich with another new symphony, this time the Seventh, subtitled "Leningrad." Written in part from inside that city while it was under siege, the composition presented a panorama from peace to war, from attack to defense, and from defeat to final victory in C major. A huge success at home, the work—shipped on microfilm by military plane, passing through Iran, North Africa, and South America on its way—was played in the United States for the first time by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony on a radio broadcast. Here it was attacked by such highbrow critics as Virgil Thomson and B.H. Haggin, who found the work thin and pretentious. But for a middlebrow critic like Winthrop Sargeant, writing in the *New Yorker*, it was "the closest thing to a great work of art that has appeared in music during the past generation." The symphony received more than sixty performances in the 1942-43 season, by the greatest conductors of the day.

As the military crisis on the Eastern front passed, so too did the widespread enthusiasm for Shostakovich. The Eighth Symphony (1943), though in the eyes of serious critics a better work, was a success neither domestically nor internationally. At home the work seemed a departure from the optimism incumbent on Soviet artists; in the United States, as strains between the wartime allies began ominously to gather, it remained little known. The jaunty, almost neoclassical Ninth Symphony (1945), received at home as a stinging rebuke by those who had wanted a victory ode along the lines of the Beethoven Ninth, fared hardly better abroad.

HAVING shown once that he could be turned around by a political drubbing, Shostakovich faced Stalin and his henchman Andrei Zhdanov again in 1948. Yet despite the violence of the crackdown on such putatively formalist composers as Prokofiev and Khachaturian, in addition to himself, Shostakovich this time had little left to give. It seemed the arbiters of Russian culture liked his songful style no better than they had liked his ventures into patriotic pastiche, such as his *Poems of the Motherland* (1947), a set of arrangements of other—and lesser—composers' tunes.

It might be said that he did indeed have something to give—his voice as a propagandist for Soviet foreign policy in the cold war. A year after being denounced in 1948, he was sent to New York to the notorious Waldorf Peace Conference, organized as it was by well-known Soviet sympathizers. There, bitingly critical of Western countries and their foreign policies, he attacked Stravinsky, delivered a warning to Prokofiev, and admitted to all the "crimes" he had so recently been charged with at home. Though he received a standing ovation in Madison Square Garden from the massed fellow-travelers, he found himself now deeply unpopular in the United States. Upon his return home he responded—or was ordered to respond—by delivering further insults to the Americans.

For Shostakovich, the next few years were a time of dissimulation. Publicly he behaved as a loyal Soviet cultural worker; privately he was humiliated and fearful. He was now, it seems, unable to write the blockbuster symphonies which were the mainstay of his position in the official Stalinist musical hierarchy. Instead he maintained and increased his output of essentially trivial film music; to this he added such easily forgotten works as *The Song of the Forests* (1949)—a tribute to Stalin's forestation campaigns—and the very drab and cool Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues (1950-51) for piano.

Since his 1936 beating over *Lady Macbeth*, Shostakovich had become practiced at writing two kinds of music, one large in scale and overbearing in emotion to please his masters, and the other intimate in aim and economical in means to express his personal feelings. To the public Shostakovich, we owe his Soviet symphonies and his film music; to the private man, we owe the chamber music he had been writing since the First String Quartet (1938). So massive were the pressures now operating on Shostakovitch in the late 1940's that to these two categories he now added a third: music written "for the drawer," i.e., not to be performed under prevailing conditions. Three works so composed—the First Violin Concerto (1947-48), the song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* (1948), and the Fourth String Quartet (1949)—now are widely and rightly considered among the most valuable of Shostakovich's entire output.

STALIN'S death in March 1953 initiated a thaw in Soviet policy at home as well as in foreign affairs. For Shostakovich, this relaxation meant a chance to write a public music which lay closer to his heart. He worked on his Tenth Symphony during the summer of 1953; it was first performed in December of the same year. The symphony, which for the first three movements is tragic in mood, seems concerned with the suffering under Stalin—until the last movement, where the optimism so dear to Soviet ideologists once again takes over. At home the symphony became a beacon for liberals, and in the United States its warm reception, at a time of Western hopes for accommodation with Russia's new rulers, made possible a resuscitation of Shostakovich's tarnished reputation.

As if to prove that despite his musical transgressions and personal doubts he remained a Soviet composer, Shostakovich's next symphonies, the Eleventh (1957) and the Twelfth (1961), returned to the grand revolutionary programs: the former was written to the subtitle "The Year 1905," and the latter was simply dubbed "1917." Predictably,

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this blatantly political music was vastly more successful at home than it was abroad.

But however comfortable the accommodation between Shostakovich and the Soviet state now seemed, the composer was holding a surprise in store for those in power. His Thirteenth Symphony (1962), written to texts by the then semi-dissident poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko, occasioned official rejection not for its music, but for the poet's verses, the now famous "Babi Yar." This impassioned protest by a non-Jewish Russian poet against a Nazi massacre of Jewish victims, uncommemorated by Soviet authorities, seemed doubly offensive when set by a non-Jewish Russian composer. Because Yevtushenko had singled out Jews as objects of Nazi murder, changes were demanded before the work could be performed a second time; the most significant of these changes required an emphasis on the sufferings of all Soviet citizens at Nazi hands, thereby obscuring Yevtushenko's protest against continuing *Soviet* anti-Semitism.

Shostakovich had never possessed a strong constitution, and ill-health now began to take an increasing toll of his strength. In the years before his death in 1975 he managed to write two more symphonies. The Fourteenth Symphony (1969), like the Thirteenth, was a setting of poetry, this time by Lorca, Apollinaire, Rilke, and a Russian contemporary of Pushkin named Küchelbecker. Calling for a much smaller orchestra than all his other symphonies, this work emphasized gloom and death. The Fifteenth Symphony (1971), by contrast, used a normal large orchestra, and contained quotations ranging from the *William Tell* Overture to *Tristan and Isolde*, and, surprisingly for a Soviet composer, *Götterdämmerung*. Speaking for official opinion, Tass found the work optimistic; the quotations from Wagner alone would seem to argue against such an interpretation.

Fittingly, Shostakovich's last works returned to the smaller forms in which he had so often taken refuge during his life: two more quartets, bringing the total to fifteen; three sets of songs, including one to texts by Michelangelo; finally, a lengthy sonata for viola and piano, absolute music culminating in an adagio in memory of Beethoven.

THROUGH their music, composers have the opportunity to speak from beyond the grave in a way given to few mortals. In Shostakovich's case, however, a posthumous salvo at his own government came in the form of a set of published monologues covering his entire life.* The response to these recollections, smuggled as they were out of the USSR, was both volcanic and predictable. For the Soviet government, the whole project was a fabrication and a provocation, designed to heat up the arms race.† In the West the evidence the book provided of the overwhelming tragedy of Shostakovich's public life and his bitter consciousness of his own suffering guaranteed a sympathetic hearing even from those not hitherto distinguished by their dedication to anti-Communism. Indeed, the contemptuous rejection of the entire Soviet system contained in the Shostakovich account seemed all the more damning in light of the composer's unblemished record of publicized activity on official missions.

To be sure, it was immediately noticed that the provenance of *Testimony* was something less than unimpeachable. As editor, Solomon Volkov—an émigré new to the West—had written up his memory of conversations with the composer, to whom he had undoubtedly been close. Each chapter of the result bore, in the manuscript, the handwritten inscription "Read. D. Shostakovich." Experts have testified that the signature was that of Shostakovich; the real question arose over whether the same could be said of *all* the words ascribed to him. Further doubt about the material arose when it became known, through an article in the *Russian Review*, a publication of the Hoover Institution, that some of the supposedly contraband material Volkov used had been legally printed in Russian musical literature. And serious factual discrepancies were found in Volkov's work as well.

Beyond the question of historiographical authenticity, important as it is, lie questions concerning the political and personal tone of the Volkov effort. Politically, it seems surprising to find Shostakovich's spleen vented not only on Stalin and his lackeys, but also on such heroes of the Russian opposition (each in his own way) as Andrei Sakharov and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Surprising, too, is the contempt shown not just for Shostakovich's tormentor in 1948 and thereafter, the composer-bureaucrat Tikhon Khrennikov, but also for Shostakovich's colleagues and fellow political sufferers Sergei Prokofiev and Aram Khachaturian. So much loathing unavoidably makes Shostakovich seem as much a misanthrope as an opponent of injustice. Yet this perception would not seem to square with that of people in the West who were able to observe him at close range.

Still, despite all the doubts the Volkov book has raised, the verdict on it for the time being must be that it presents a fair picture, in broad outline, of how Shostakovich felt at the end of his life. His quoted words on the first page of these recollections—"Looking back, I see nothing but ruins, only mountains of corpses. And I do not wish to build new Potemkin villages on these ruins"—ring true, both about Russia and about Shostakovich.

The fact that his words may not all have originated in quite the way presented, or that some details do not quite tally, suggests a resemblance with other well-known examples of the Russian musical memoir. After all, similar questions have been raised about the *Recollections* of Sergei Rachmaninoff (as told to Oskar von Riesemann) and the several volumes of Stravinsky's Robert Craft-inspired memoirs. In the area of politics, such questions have also been raised concerning the Edward Crankshaw-Strobe Talbott *Khrushchev Remembers*. In the case of

* *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov, translated from the Russian by Antonina W. Bouis, Harper & Row (1979), 289 pp., $15.00.

† The Soviet musical establishment, in fact, wasted no time in circulating its own version of Shostakovich's life. This attempt, *Pages from the Life of Dmitri Shostakovich*, by Dmitri and Ludmilla Sollertinsky (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), was patently puerile and sanitized; it passed almost unnoticed in this country.

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Shostakovich no less than that of Khrushchev, we are probably lucky, given the political context, to have found out so much.

WHATEVER the undoubted interest of the posthumous controversy over Shostakovich, it cannot but have the effect of placing his music second to the political storms which have swirled around him as a Soviet composer. While the excitement has surely guaranteed that his name would be well-known, it has also rendered more difficult a judicious consideration of his artistic achievement.

Any such consideration must begin with the fact that there is not, as the Soviet party line would have it, one musical Shostakovich, writing music for the appreciation of the broad masses of Soviet society. Nor, for that matter, are there two Shostakoviches, as the more enlightened Soviet critics would hold—a public orator speaking to great occasions and a private bard speaking to musicians and cognoscenti. There were rather, it now seems, four separate creative personalities operating at various times and to various degrees during the career of Dmitri Shostakovich. Each of these personalities produced a body of musical composition which suffered a distinct fate at home and another, equally distinct, fate abroad.

The earliest of the personalities was that of the youthful scourge. The iconoclasm was at first tentative and even sometimes parodistically lyrical, as in the vastly successful First Symphony. Soon, however, the sarcasm went beyond the bounds of spoofing, and the element of parody began to feed on itself. The *Age of Gold* ballet, meant as a ridiculing of bourgeois culture abroad, now seems like hurdy-gurdy music, brittle and nastily shallow. *The Nose*, with its mean and thin-sounding orchestration and its talky vocal lines unsupported by either orchestra or melody, conjures up—as Shostakovich no doubt meant it to do—a good-for-nothing, pointless society. *Lady Macbeth* suggests not only a rotten social order, but the less appetizing idea that all human beings are animal creatures, driven entirely by instincts of sex and brutality.

This aspect of Shostakovich's creative work was destructive, and intended as such. In the Soviet Union of the 1920's such destructiveness could be seen as directed against a pre-revolutionary social structure, and thus a continuation of political upheaval by other, i.e., artistic means. And hostility to the past also fit into the modernist disillusion so rampant in the West in post-World War I artistic circles.

At home, however, Shostakovich was to discover the precious political truth that in every revolutionary calendar there is a Thermidor, a time when the revolution, in ending, turns on its own protagonists. Though it was Stalin's evil genius to replace the terror of Lenin with a greater terror, any regime holding power in Russia would have attempted to promulgate policies of construction, order, and personal discipline. In such a climate, the artistic attitude exemplified by *Lady Macbeth* could hardly have been supported. And in a society based upon state monopoly of power, what cannot be supported must be violently rejected. Such a rejection had in fact begun with the reaction of some critics to *The Nose* upon its appearance in 1930; the mess over *Lady Macbeth* six years later only capped a developing cultural policy.*

UNFORTUNATELY for Shostakovich, in our century youthful iconoclasm has not proved sufficient to make an entire career. In the case of Stravinsky, the iconoclasm of *The Rite of Spring* and *The Story of a Soldier* was replaced, in *The Wedding*, by a return to a sympathetic consideration of his Russian origin and, in *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphony of Psalms*, to veneration of the past and of religion. For Shostakovich, the replacement of deconstruction by construction meant the writing of Soviet symphonies, the first of these being the Fifth. The times—as pictured by Stalin—demanded sincerity, melody, largeness of gesture, and optimism; all these Shostakovich seemed to supply in abundance. But there was one flaw. The reality of life in the USSR was not one of joy and creation, but one of fear and murder. No musician could sing authentically of the happiness of the present and the future, and no one, including Shostakovich, did.

That Shostakovich came fairly close to making a success of the required aesthetic lie is a tribute to his own immense talent and facility, and also to his appropriation of something of Gustav Mahler's technique of mocking romanticism while reveling in it. But ultimately, as with all lies in art, Shostakovich's attempt failed. Not only do the slow movements of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies now seem forced, bloated, and windy, but the jaunty ending movements seem almost pathetically incapable of finishing with conviction what began at such length in lyricism. Much of the same must be said of the Seventh and Eighth, or wartime, symphonies; the inability of Shostakovich even to attempt a triumphal Ninth Symphony is telling proof that he himself knew the hollowness of the efforts he had been making for almost a decade.

Nevertheless, to the end of his life Shostakovich continued to essay the grand rhetorical statement. When he could use his weighty manner to express his thoughts outside of the official aesthetic, the results were indeed more convincing. The Tenth Symphony, written in the wake of Stalin's death and amid hopes for a thaw, is in large part a success—thanks, one suspects, to the new freedom he felt; the terrifying scherzo (which according to Shostakovich's account in *Testimony* was meant as a picture of Stalin) seems particularly true. The *Babi Yar* Symphony, too, though not especially memorable as a piece of musical creation in itself, lacks the pretentiousness which came so easily to Shostakovich in treating great subjects.

Another aspect of Shostakovich's music can be passed over quickly. His film music now seems totally undistinguished, the product of an easy pen and no inspiration at all. The same goes for his openly party-oriented music, such as the *Song of the Forests* and the 1970 *Loyalty*, eight ballads for unaccompanied

* While it has often been thought in the West that the cause of Stalin's anger at Shostakovich was the dissonant *musical* texture of *Lady Macbeth*, it seems now that the root of his displeasure lay in the licentiousness of the libretto.

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male chorus. The text of the latter work is a particularly maudlin example of "positive" Soviet music; the first ballad, for example, goes:

> I shall walk on toward Lenin in spite of life's limitation, just as in that immemorial year people walked all across Russia. I shall seek his advice, I shall keep nothing from him, and in the enlightened quietude I shall find an answer. I shall understand; I shall achieve; I shall become invincible.

The music to this evocation of Lenin as Jesus is old Russian polyphony, reminiscent equally of church and court. But Shostakovich, by all testimony, was an atheist, and he suffered for the last forty years of his life from a tyranny of which Lenin was the father. Is it then surprising that the music seems both unrooted in time and empty of personality? As so often happens in such art, what begins in enforced patriotism ends in forgery.

If these three modes of Shostakovich's works—the brittle, the grandiloquent, and the trivial and false—were all that comprised the composer's claim to greatness, he would retain little of permanent interest for music lovers. But there is a fourth Shostakovich, smaller in scope, vastly more refined in taste and execution, and both direct and honest in feeling. This Shostakovich is not simply someone who wrote for a small audience rather than for the great Soviet public (composed equally of the masses and the bureaucrats); it is a Shostakovich who, at his best, did not care whether his music was performed in the foreseeable future at all.

So it is hardly surprising that the greatest music of Shostakovich is precisely that music he composed for himself at the darkest period of Stalin's rule, the period of renewed terror during the postwar years. Most important of this music is the First Violin Concerto, written in 1947-48 but not performed until 1955. In the work's four movements the composer managed to use (in a way he did in no other of his large-scale works) an integrated musical fabric to express a consistent and authentic mood. Gone here is the omnipresent urge to juxtapose bathetic melody and circus tunes; nowhere is vulgar material invoked to convey high emotion. No program seems necessary to explain the work, for the attention which it compels is drawn by the worth of the music in itself. Altogether this is the best concerto for violin since those of Berg and Bartók.*

Not quite such high praise can be given to all the eleven songs of the cycle, *From Jewish Folk Poetry*. Unperformable when it was written in 1948, it too was first heard in 1955. Eight songs, sung variously by a soprano, an alto, and a tenor, depict in moving terms the whole range of Jewish suffering in pre-1917 Russia, running the gamut from the death of a child to the terrible winters endured in poverty. So powerful was the sway of Stalinist power that even music composed in secret had to take it into account: thus Shostakovich ended this cycle with three songs based, as a summary of one of them puts it, on the need to "Forget the bygone grief and rejoice in the present." The first two of the three invoke the blessings of collective farms. The last describes the good fortune of Jews under the new dispensation. The summary runs:

> An elderly couple go to the theater. And later that evening they speak of how fortunate they are. She was only a shoemaker's wife but their sons would be doctors! What a bright star shines over their heads!

The star in question is, of course, not the Star of David but the Star of Stalin. The music for these celebrations is, not surprisingly, glib, catchy, and childishly gay. Had the cycle ended after the eighth song, it would have come close to the greatness of Schubert's *Die Winterreise*; as written, it is a standing rebuke to the influence of politics on art.

No stricture of this kind applies to the Fourth String Quartet, written in 1949 and played first in 1953, eight months after Stalin's death. Shostakovich's chamber music had always been attractive, reflecting a formal economy and discipline absent from his larger works. But the Fourth Quartet shows a new sophistication of musical conception, contemporary and spare. The lyricism is unforced and affecting, and the rapid movements are both necessary and serious.

It is plain, indeed, that Shostakovich's consistently best music lies in the fifteen string quartets he wrote over a period of almost forty years. Even the least of them are solid and interesting, and the best are highly eloquent. The last four quartets, beginning with the Twelfth in 1968, use such modernist devices as tone-rows and unconventional instrumental effects; the result seems never to attack the idea of traditional music but rather to reinforce a prevailingly tragic mood.

Proof of the quality of Shostakovich's quartets lies in their present repertory status, at least in the West. This status does not reflect a mass popularity; nor is it the case that famous instrumental ensembles have been intent on bringing them to public notice. Indeed Shostakovich's music has been selected by young groups (among them several English quartets) searching for music with which to establish their own claims to artistic distinction. Recent complete performances of the quartets in New York by the Fitzwilliam Quartet have been successful and publicized; record catalogues will undoubtedly soon begin to reflect this musical fact of life.

Given Shostakovich's success in the smaller genre of chamber music, it would be tempting to blame his failure in larger forms entirely on Stalin & Co. But to do this without making the proper distinctions would be to overlook the fact that much of the best music of the last fifty years throughout the entire European musical world has been written in just those smaller forms in which Shostakovich excelled. One thinks immediately of the last two quartets of Bartók, the last quartet of Schoenberg, the chamber music of Prokofiev. Here in the United States, there is a special distinction to the quartets of Walter Piston, Roger Sessions, and

* It is a pleasure to report, given the record companies' present rapid deletions of important contemporary works, that a great performance of this concerto, by David Oistrakh with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the New York Philharmonic, is still available on Columbia MG-33328.

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William Schuman; the First Quartet (1940) of Harold Shapero remains an extraordinary work.*

While the Soviet Union is a special case because of the enormous discrepancy there between the phony grandeur of public life and the alienation of the individual, it does seem that nowhere in recent years has there been the kind of easy correspondence between society and individuals which might make authentic large-scale work possible. The special crime of the Soviet dictators has not been simply the demand that works be written which glorify the state; it has rather been the ruthless elimination of every other open artistic tendency that has dared to arise. It cannot be repeated too often that while the state has a right to wish to support only "constructive" art, this does not mean that it has a right to bar art of any other kind.

What is at issue in Soviet Russia (one does not speak here of the terror and the slaughter) is not the aesthetic taste of the rulers and bureaucrats. Such taste, it seems at least from the data of our century, is a constant. What is at issue is totalitarianism itself, the horrid idea that the state or party can determine the course of all of life in society. Here, not in the realm of taste and aesthetics, is the reason for the destruction of the flourishing world of Russian art, literature, and music accomplished after the 1917 revolution by the Communists.

The lesson of Shostakovich's life and music is, therefore, an old but unfamiliar one. Art and life both do best under freedom. Had Shostakovich possessed more of that precious good, he might well not have written so many artificially forced compositions, and he might have written even more of the smaller works for which he had such a great gift. That he wrote so many of these intimate masterpieces is to our musical good fortune; it is also a sign that creation survives even in the shadow of death. Because Shostakovich has once again taught us this needed lesson, his music—and he—will live.

* This work was available until recently on Columbia CMS 6176. It is worth searching for.

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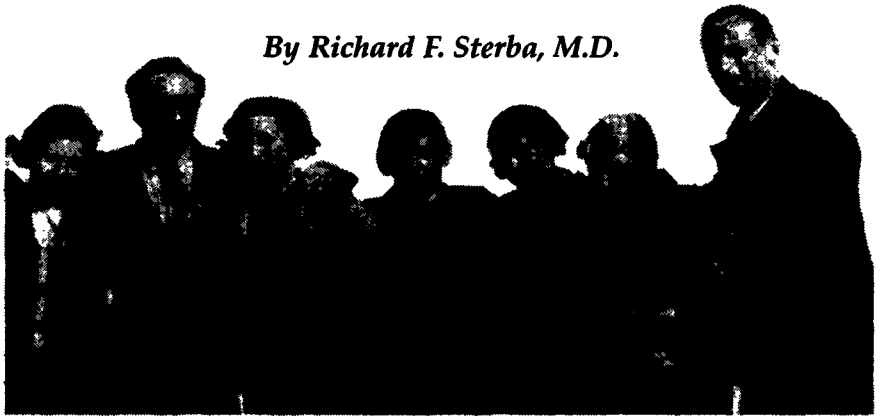

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Books in Review

Misplaced Priorities

THE PAST HAS ANOTHER PATTERN. By GEORGE W. BALL. *Norton. 527 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

ALTHOUGH he has not held an important government position since briefly serving as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in 1968, George W. Ball remains a figure of controversy and influence. Probably no past or current high-ranking foreign-policy official has been as outspoken in castigating the actions of the Israeli government, and Ball has coupled his increasingly harsh rhetoric with concrete proposals for punishing Israel, most recently advocating the "deduction" of aid promised Israel and its diversion to Lebanon. The Middle East is not Ball's only preoccupation. He has, for instance, denounced the Reagan administration's efforts to thwart construction of the Siberian pipeline as "marked by hypocrisy, self-deception, and an astonishing ignorance of past experience."

Concerning the two above-mentioned issues—Israel and the pipeline sanctions—Ball's views are consistent with the prevailing judgment of our foreign-policy elite. Yet Ball's opinions on these and other matters carry special weight. In part this is due to the fact of his long and varied experience in politics and government affairs. Ball's credentials are, in fact, impressive: administrator in the lend-lease program; director of the Strategic Bombing Survey; adviser to Jean Monnet, the guiding figure in the movement for European unity; aide and speechwriter to Adlai Stevenson in his two presidential bids; Under Secretary of State during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. And there is a strong possibility that Ball would have capped his career by being named Secretary of State had Hubert Humphrey won the Presidency in 1968 or 1972.

Ball has also attained a certain stature because of his reputation for political and intellectual independence. No doubt this reputation has been cultivated by Ball's sharply polemical (and increasingly self-righteous) writings. Nevertheless, as this book of memoirs suggests, George Ball's opinions and attitudes concerning the conduct of foreign policy do not fit neatly into orthodox liberal-conservative categories. It is, I suspect, precisely because Ball takes a dim view of many trendy, revisionist notions that he is taken more seriously than, say, Robert McNamara or McGeorge Bundy, to name two of his former colleagues in the Kennedy-Johnson years.

Thus, despite his opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war, Ball is contemptuous of the antiwar movement and bitter toward the movement's academic cheerleaders. He views the embrace of Marxism by underdeveloped countries as a prescription for economic disaster, and was dubious about the grandiose schemes for Third World development which were promoted so confidently during his years in the State Department. He sees the United Nations as an irrelevant institution. He expresses no regrets about the tough American response to the Soviets during the Cuban missile crisis. Nor is he philosophically opposed to the manipulation of events by the United States or even outright intervention. He regards the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 with equanimity, having decided that Juan Bosch was a demagogue and potential dupe of the Communists. More significantly, he believed that the coup which led to the overthrow and death of Ngo Dinh Diem was unfortunate but necessary, and he even helped draft the fateful cable which gave American sanction to the enterprise.

Thus while Ball counts among his friends such liberal eminences as Chester Bowles and John Kenneth Galbraith, liberalism as a philosophy appears to have influenced the direction of his political views to a lesser extent than did his many years' experience in the world of corporate finance. As a private attorney, Ball represented many prestigious foreign clients in the years after World War II, most notably the Patronat, a federation of major French industries. He moves comfortably in those rarefied circles where the representatives of business and finance intermingle with elected officials and government bureaucrats; Ball even played a prominent role in the establishment of the Bilderberg group, a transnational organization which brings the free world's elite together for private discussions, and is the *bête noire* of conspiracy theorists. He has worked since his retirement from government service with the investment house of Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb.

Ball himself is a confirmed believer in a form of welfare-state capitalism, a capitalism, however, untainted by the corrupting influence of protectionism. Although Ball was not among those who thought that increased trade relations with the West would necessarily temper the global adventurism of the Soviet Union, he has long opposed the employment of economic restrictions as a foreign-policy weapon. Furthermore, Ball tends to stress the West's economic interests as paramount in the formulation of foreign policy, above and beyond strategic or ideological considerations.

It is hardly surprising, given Ball's essentially moderate stance, that the public figure with whom he had the closest association was Adlai Stevenson. As Ball emphasizes, Stevenson was by no means the convinced liberal that so many of his supporters from the reform movement assumed him to be. Ball's experiences in Stevenson's presidential efforts taught him to share the candidate's disdain for electioneering and for many of the people involved in the campaign process, and to despise the special pleading of ethnic and interest

ARCH PUDDINGTON *is executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy and editor of* Workers Under Communism.

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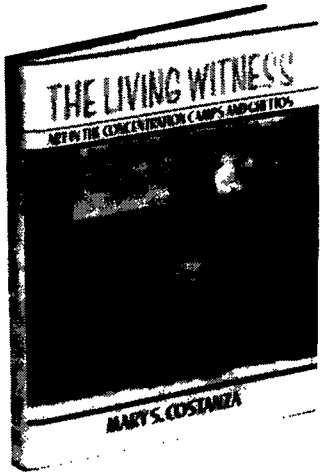

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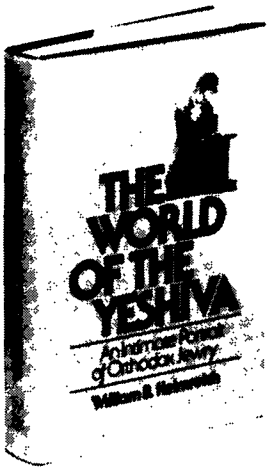

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groups, Jews prominent among them. In Stevenson the presidential nominee, such attitudes proved to be fatal flaws, and Ball is attuned to the weaknesses in Stevenson's personality, particularly his need to be constantly surrounded by a coterie of mostly female admirers. Nevertheless, Ball seems inevitably drawn to men, like Stevenson, who radiate an aura of culture, reserve, and an aristocratic bearing. Jean Monnet was one such man, and Ball treats Monnet almost reverentially. Another, more problematical figure, was Albert Speer. Ball was among a small group of Americans (Galbraith and Paul Nitze were others) to interview Speer immediately after the fall of the Third Reich. Ball and his colleagues got on rather well with Speer, even though "secretly ashamed" of their sympathies for a high-ranking official of a regime they loathed. Explains Ball:

> I knew I should feel repelled by Speer because his willing association with the filthy Nazi thugs marked him as a man who had touched evil; yet, try as I might, I could not sustain that mood. Speer was not at all in the mold of the brutal Nazi—instead, and this is what made my tolerant attitude toward him so inexcusable—he seemed, to use Noel Coward's derisive phrase, "like us."

Now Ball is not unique in having had to grapple with the dilemma of how to deal with the enemy on a personal basis; and he is certainly more self-aware and candid than the Western visitors who regularly report back on how "refined" and "cultured" this or that Kremlin notable is, most recently Yuri Andropov, the former KGB chief who is seen as a possible successor to Brezhnev.

Unfortunately, Ball is not satisfied with a simple explanation of his own feelings toward Speer; he feels compelled to insert a gratuitous disquisition on the potential for the emergence of an authoritarian or fascist regime in the United States. In the course of these ruminations, Ball asserts that had Richard Nixon and his associates not been brought down by Watergate, they might well have "dangerously undermined" the democratic fabric here. This is one of many highly critical, even vitriolic, observations he makes about Nixon in this book. Ball can feel compassion for a Nazi leader who admitted to having employed slave labor in his mammoth construction enterprises; but he maintains an attitude of intense dislike toward Nixon, a man whose crimes cannot reasonably be compared to Speer's. The conclusion is inescapable that it is Nixon's gracelessness and street-fighter impulses that offend Ball as much as his involvement in Watergate or his Vietnam policies. Similarly, one suspects that Ball's intemperance toward Israel is caused in part by the rough, aggressive style of Menachem Begin and other Israeli leaders.

BALL'S treatment of Speer is revealing in another sense. In justification of his leniency toward the German, he notes that he and other American officials considered reports of the Holocaust "exaggerated." He adds that the "idea of mass extermination was so far outside the comprehension of most Americans that we instinctively refused to believe in its existence." Again, Ball is by no means alone in having failed to recognize early on the full horror of Hitler's Final Solution. Yet he seems to have only partially learned the lesson of totalitarianism's capacity for evil. He makes not one reference to the genocide committed against the Cambodian people by the Khmer Rouge, and this in a book which deals at great length with the Vietnam war and its aftermath. Nor, in the surprisingly brief sections devoted to the Middle East (marked by several snide references to American Jews), is there a hint of recognition that the irrationalism and violence of the PLO and other Arab regimes may be a major reason for Israeli unwillingness to accept a Palestinian state on the West Bank.

Not that Ball is naive about totalitarianism. Indeed, it was his conviction that a democratic country is ill-equipped to engage totalitarian forces on a distant Third World battlefield which played a large role in his decision to oppose American participation in Vietnam. Ball, moreover, clearly understood the implications of his position: American withdrawal would inevitably lead to a total victory for the Communists. As he puts it: "The North Vietnamese would never agree to any settlement that did not offer them a virtual certainty of gaining domination of the whole of Vietnam within a reasonable time frame. That was the major point I incessantly argued, with no success." To have prevailed, Ball says, would have required a massive, long-term American presence, and the employment of tactics too brutal for the American public or world opinion to accept.

Ball did not believe that the war was immoral, at least as prosecuted by Kennedy and Johnson, although he was seriously disturbed that our allies might think so. He felt, with others, that it was the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time. Given this point of view, one is taken aback by his unsympathetic, even angry, attitude toward the Saigon government. To be sure, the successive governments which held sway in South Vietnam posed many problems for the U.S. Yet as Ball states elsewhere, an inability to develop strong, non-totalitarian leadership is an endemic problem in post-colonial societies; he even refers to difficulties engendered by "premature independence." Nonetheless, he writes that America "could never achieve terms that would satisfy the Saigon government; its war aims were rigidly defined by the desire of those in power to keep their jobs." It seems never to have occurred to him that the South Vietnamese, like himself, recognized that an American withdrawal would guarantee a Communist triumph, and perceived American proposals for coalition governments and other concessions as opening wedges toward an eventual disengagement.

WHILE Ball has written that a great nation like the U.S. should never "bully" its allies, this stricture seems to apply only to our allies in Western Europe and Japan. It most certainly does not extend to small non-European nations, like South Vietnam, that are aligned with or dependent on America. Ball, as noted earlier, has advanced several schemes to pressure or discipline Israel. In a similar vein, despite his professed anti-Communism, Ball is

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capable of maintaining an attitude of detached forbearance where the Soviets are concerned; in contrast, he responds to proposals for economic sanctions with anger. And while sympathetic to the captive East European nations, he regards their plight as less serious than possible Soviet "overreaction" to liberation efforts. Concerning this issue, he notes: "If the Kremlin felt key bloc countries slipping their harness, it might well be driven to strike out blindly to the point of a dangerous collision." The emergence of Solidarity, or of future Solidaritys, is not, he seems to imply, in America's interest.

George Ball believes that his philosophy of foreign affairs is motivated by a perception of America's interests, a perception which embraces the spread of democratic values and other humane ideals. His outlook would be appropriate in an orderly world, where nations, and even adversaries, adhere to a set of mutually recognized principles and where rational behavior prevails. Unfortunately, we live in a world where terrorist forces and huge, totalitarian powers, unrestrained by the sentiments of their own people and impervious to world opinion, seek out every opportunity to subject others to their control. Confronted by these harsh realities, Ball turns, often in cold fury, not against our adversaries, but against those in the democratic camp who present impediments to a coming to terms. His priorities are sadly misplaced.

Welfare and Society

THE POLITICS OF WELFARE. By BLANCHE BERNSTEIN. *Abt Books. 204 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

BLANCHE BERNSTEIN is a public official who has become anathema to her former colleagues in the social-welfare community. In their view, her basic principle—that welfare programs should be administered in accordance with law—verges on an outrageous insult to the human spirit. In defense of her position, Dr. Bernstein has written an exemplary book, setting forth with a minimum of understandable rancor the immense political problems she faced in administering welfare programs in New York State and New York City from 1975 to 1980.

In practical terms, there were—and there remain—three major defects in the laws that give federal assistance, with local contributions, to households that are not financially independent. First, in New York City and presumably elsewhere too, a large number of people receive welfare payments they are not entitled to under the laws. Second, it is difficult to the point of impossibility to get fathers of children on welfare to contribute to the cost of supporting their children. Finally, the law makes it difficult to encourage welfare recipients to join the work force even when they have the opportunity to do so, because the

ROGER STARR *is a member of the editorial board of the New York* Times. *He was head of New York City's Housing and Development Administration under Mayor Abraham Beame.*

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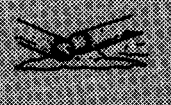

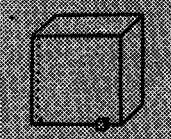

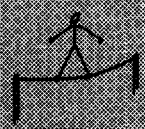

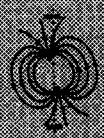

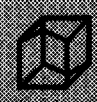

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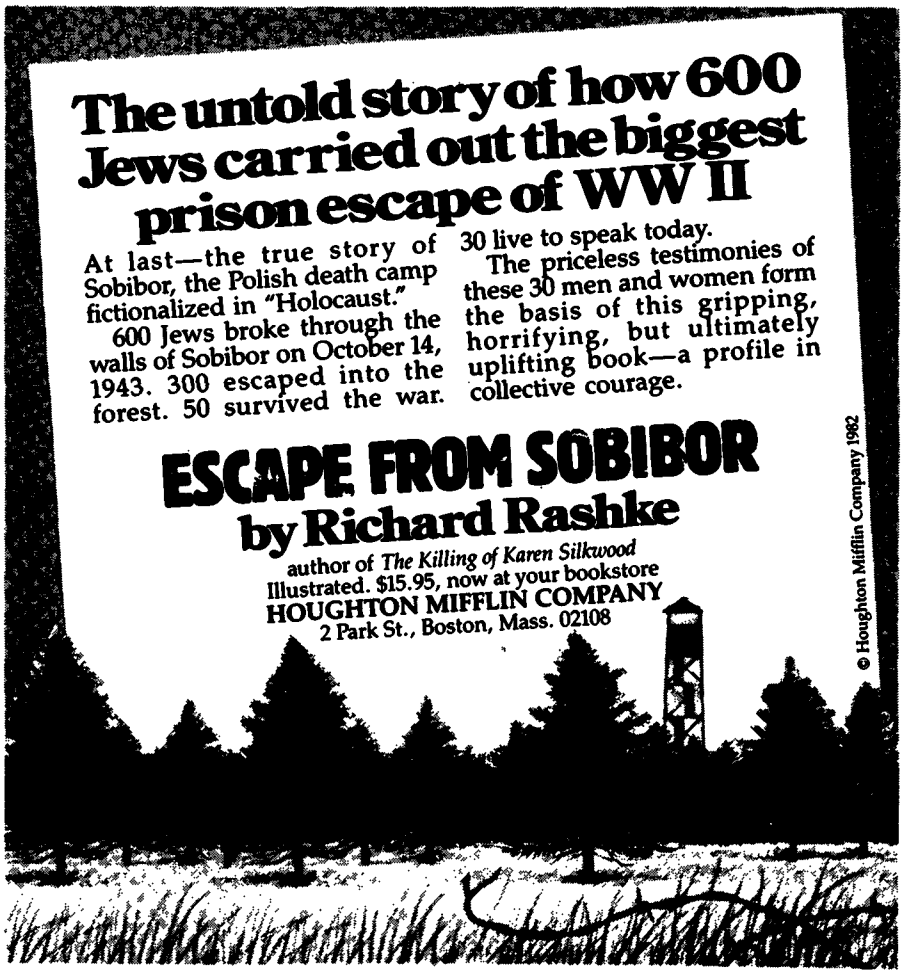
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loss (particularly in health benefits) of their welfare grant sometimes matches or exceeds their after-tax gain from employment. Welfare clients may not be brilliant, but they are economically rational.

In Dr. Bernstein's judgment, all three of these special problems could be dealt with were it not for a single destructive influence: the refusal of the social-work community to acknowledge that they *are* problems, and its equally maddening refusal to help improve the workings of the law. In New York, that social-welfare community includes professional social workers on the staffs of large charitable organizations. It also includes their lay board members, whose prestige is persuasive to the media but who depend on their staffs for information and even opinions. It includes the staff of the city department that issues welfare checks. And it includes the politicians and civil-rights leaders who view social welfare as a means of supporting and protecting non-white victims of the nation's long history of discrimination and deprivation.

These are the people, Dr. Bernstein asserts, who are indifferent to the fact that an amazingly high percentage of households receiving welfare assistance in New York City are legally ineligible to do so. In 1971, for example, a law was passed in New York that required welfare clients to pick up their checks at state employment-service offices. Dr. Bernstein writes that 20 percent of the people on the rolls failed to report, thus forfeiting their right to the checks. The reaction of the Community Council of New York to this turn of events was a demand that the law be repealed, because asking welfare clients to visit the employment-service offices—where they might be offered jobs but could not be forced to take them—caused them to waste their money on carfare.

WHAT is behind such an attitude? For one thing, as Dr. Bernstein suggests, social workers genuinely, and realistically, fear that if word leaks out that ineligible families receive welfare benefits, public support for the programs will disappear. Then, too, social workers have traditionally viewed their clients as people

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whose dignity must be protected above all. It is in keeping with this traditional view, Dr. Bernstein points out in a long appendix, for social workers to object to programs for improving the homes of welfare clients if it will impair the clients' freedom to spend their rental allowance as they wish. In the same vein, social workers fought *against* the "demeaning" food-stamp program when it was first announced in the 1960's.

But there is another factor at work here, hinted at in Dr. Bernstein's discussion of the historical background. It fell to her to administer the nation's largest welfare program in the shadow of a civil-rights movement which stressed the systemic injustices that, its leaders held, were wholly responsible for lagging black income and rising family instability. This emphasis resulted in a serious questioning of the accustomed relationship between social worker and client. Thus, one of the leading social-work institutions in New York, the Community Service Society, decided in the 1960's to abandon case work because it was based on the false and outdated view that individuals were at least partly responsible for the consequences of their own actions.

The implications of this change were not apparent to everyone, although I myself had the good luck to be educated on the point at a public hearing of the Board of Estimate. At that hearing, a woman on welfare shouted at Mayor John Lindsay that she wanted him to approve a public-housing project under discussion only if its management were forbidden to discriminate against mothers with illegitimate children. "I've got six kids," she screamed, "and each one of them has a different daddy. It's my job to have kids, and your job, Mr. Mayor, to take care of them." My guess is that she heard this formulation from a retiring social worker. Dr. Bernstein, by contrast, does not believe that adolescent mothers of illegitimate children are necessarily capable of handling their own affairs. People, she would argue, rarely cure themselves of their disorders, and are rarely cured without their active cooperation.

The second major issue on which Dr. Bernstein found herself quarreling with the social-work community was over getting fathers of welfare children to pay some of the costs involved in sustaining them. If anything, the opposition to searching out fathers has been even more virulent than the opposition to rooting out ineligibles.

The excuses for laxity are many and various: the courts, says the social-work fraternity, have not established a universal ruling; fathers might lose their jobs if their wages were garnished; their earnings are too low to permit them to make contributions comfortably; and so on. The basic fact remains that in their effort to be compassionate, New Yorkers have lost the energy to make serious judgments about the responsibilities of mortals. Surely there is a perverse elitism in the refusal of Family Court justices

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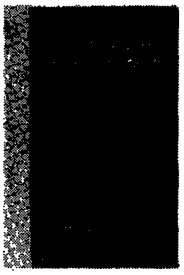

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in New York to require working fathers of children on welfare to pay some costs now covered by taxpayers.

MUCH of the same excuse-making permeates the reaction of the social-welfare community to the effort to lead welfare clients into the work force. In the social-workers' mind, welfare recipients should be free (like everyone else, one can hear them blandly asserting) to work or not as they please. Not only does the community decry the value of work to the human spirit, and engage in solemn cant to the effect that no one should be made to work in a "dead-end job," but its members reserve their most bitter comments for the authority figures—the policemen, the old-fashioned clerics, the employers, the teachers, the merchants, the landlords—who are all part of the citifying process, crude as it always was, cruel as it has often been.

Dr. Bernstein places responsibility here not solely on the bureaucrats who administer the welfare program, or on the legislators who have been unable to devise laws that will both support the poor and encourage them (and others) to work for a minimal increase in real earnings, but on those upper-class and upper-middle-class civic leaders who have forgotten the simplest of societal facts—namely, that people are socialized by example. The refusal of these civic leaders to bother with the nasty, disheartening work of enforcing standards—to assert that one form of behavior is acceptable, another not—cuts off at the knees the efforts of lower authorities to help the poor in their transition from rural to urban life.

One puts down Dr. Bernstein's book wondering whether, as a society attains general affluence, its successful citizens do not become too busy enjoying themselves to play their needed roles as models and makers of patterns. It may, after all, turn out to be as hard to sustain the will to reclaim the welfare population as it is to sustain the national will to defend ourselves globally in the face of the Soviet challenge. In the case of both, the failure to *see* the challenge for what it is, and to face the need for a commensurate

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response, demonstrates that quality of decadence which is so easy to observe in other societies, so hard to recognize in ourselves.

Triumph of the Therapeutic

THE KILLING OF BONNIE GARLAND. By WILLARD GAYLIN. *Simon & Schuster. 366 pp. $16.50.*

Reviewed by NAOMI MUNSON

IN THE early morning hours of July 7, 1977, Richard Herrin, a recent Yale graduate, sat in his estranged girlfriend's bedroom at her parents' home in Scarsdale, New York. He was watching the *Tonight Show* and leafing through *Sports Illustrated* while she slept, when the notion came to him to kill her. He left the room, wandered through the house in search of an appropriate weapon, returned with a hammer, checked to make sure the girl was still asleep, and proceeded to bash her skull in. Then, covered in blood and brain tissue, he grabbed her car keys, got into her car, and drove around for several hours until he found himself at a Catholic church in Coxsackie. Herrin roused the priest and announced that he wished to turn himself in for the murder of Bonnie Garland, twenty years old.

Joan Garland, Bonnie's mother, was awakened at eight that same morning by the police, who inquired whether she knew Richard Herrin, whether she had a daughter, Bonnie, whether Richard and Bonnie were in the house. Mrs. Garland ran upstairs to look; she found Bonnie's room spattered with blood and brains, and she found her daughter lying naked and unconscious in a pool of her own blood, gasping for air. Bonnie died at 10:38 P.M. that evening.

Richard, meanwhile, was becoming the focus of a campaign of love and forgiveness among the Catholic community, at his alma mater and elsewhere. As soon as word of the "incident" got out, the community rallied around, chiefly in the persons of two assistant Yale chaplains, Father Peter Fagan and Sister Ramona Pena. They hurried to Herrin's side, equipped with messages of support and understanding, lawyers' names, and petitions for bail—not to mention the bail money itself.

And so it was that thirty-five days after Bonnie Garland gasped her way out of this world, Richard Herrin was out on bail, living in Albany at a school for delinquent boys run by a Catholic order called the Christian Brothers. During his months among the Brothers, Herrin worked in a religious bookstore and for a time attended state-university classes under an assumed

NAOMI MUNSON *has written articles and reviews for the* Wall Street Journal, *the* American Spectator, *and other periodicals. Her articles in* COMMENTARY *include "The Case of Janet Cooke" (August 1981) and "Having Babies Again" (April 1981).*

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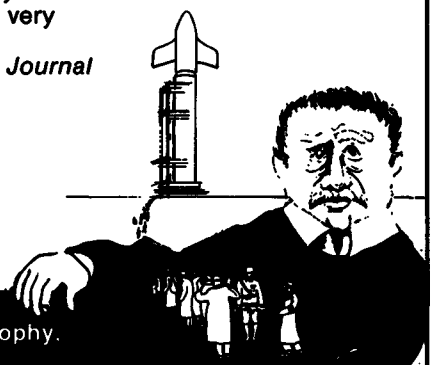

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name, while his Yale support group continued its fund-raising and politicking, and while his lawyer, Jack Litman, prepared his defense.

There was, unfortunately, no question of fobbing the crime off on the gardener or on some itinerant burglar; Richard's confession and the evidence worked overwhelmingly against such a tactic. Nor had any of the defendant's constitutional rights been violated; Herrin had not been browbeaten, physically assaulted, left by the police to languish without food or drink, or forbidden communication with the outside world. On the contrary, he had been treated politely, even gently, throughout.

The only course thus left to his attorney was the insanity plea. Even Litman himself did not expect to succeed with this defense. What he planned was to use the plea in order to introduce otherwise inadmissible evidence. That evidence, Litman believed, would convince the jury not that Herrin was legally insane but that at the time of the murder he was functioning under "extreme emotional disturbance." Whatever such a phrase may mean to mental-health professionals, legally in the state of New York it means the difference between a murder conviction—carrying a minimum sentence of 15 years—and conviction for manslaughter, which carries a *maximum* penalty of 8⅓ to 25 years.

Litman's strategy paid off: the jury found Richard Herrin guilty of manslaughter rather than murder. Even so, the attorney, who had expected to get his client off with a couple of years, was dismayed to hear the judge pronounce the "grossly unfair and unwarranted" sentence of 8⅓ to 25 years in prison.

Nor, according to Willard Gaylin, a psychiatrist in whose book this information appears, was Litman the only one who found the sentence unfair and unwarranted. Richard Herrin's friends in the Church were also distraught at the severity of the sentence, inspired as they were (in Dr. Gaylin's words) by the "Christian vision of the purpose of life [as] man's relationship to a God of love and forgiveness [which] preempts the primary importance of life on earth."

Brother Thomas, leader of the Christian Brothers, might indeed be said to hold life in rather low esteem. "Oh," he told Dr. Gaylin, "I think there are worse crimes [than murder in cold blood]. When millions of people are going to bed hungry, isn't that a great crime?" Brother Thomas, having found Herrin "a very loving person, . . . a fine person," was doubly distressed at the sentence because of his aversion to the very notion of prison. "I have," he confessed, "a problem with incarceration. It's barbaric putting people into cages."

And Sister Ramona Pena, a New Yorker of Spanish descent who was radicalized as a child by the Spanish Civil War, questioned the judge's objectivity in handing down such a severe sentence. "You had," she explained to Gaylin, "a Westchester County judge who was one of the leading figures in the Republican party, and the victim's father was another leading Republican figure in Westchester." Politics, however, was of secondary importance to this woman of the cloth; quite apart from the sinister motives of the judge, Sister Ramona objected to the penalty because in her view prison is not the proper route to redemption. Even Adolf Eichmann, she believes, should have "had time to reexamine his life"; rather than punishing Eichmann, Sister Ramona would have preferred "to catch him up and have him think." According to Dr. Gaylin, Sister Ramona has "the vision, bias, and optimism of a New Testament prophet. . . . She is looking for a Christian world that has yet to come."

But if the day of the prophet has not yet come, the age of therapy is definitely upon us. As Dr. Gaylin ruefully puts it, "While the mechanisms of Richard's defense may have been organized from the Christion community, the substance of his defense was defined in terms of the *new* gospel." This gospel holds that "we all share the same primordial unconscious [where] we are all killers, rapists, incestual, exhibitionistic, voyeuristic, aggressive, and homicidal. The difference between the criminal and the model citizen

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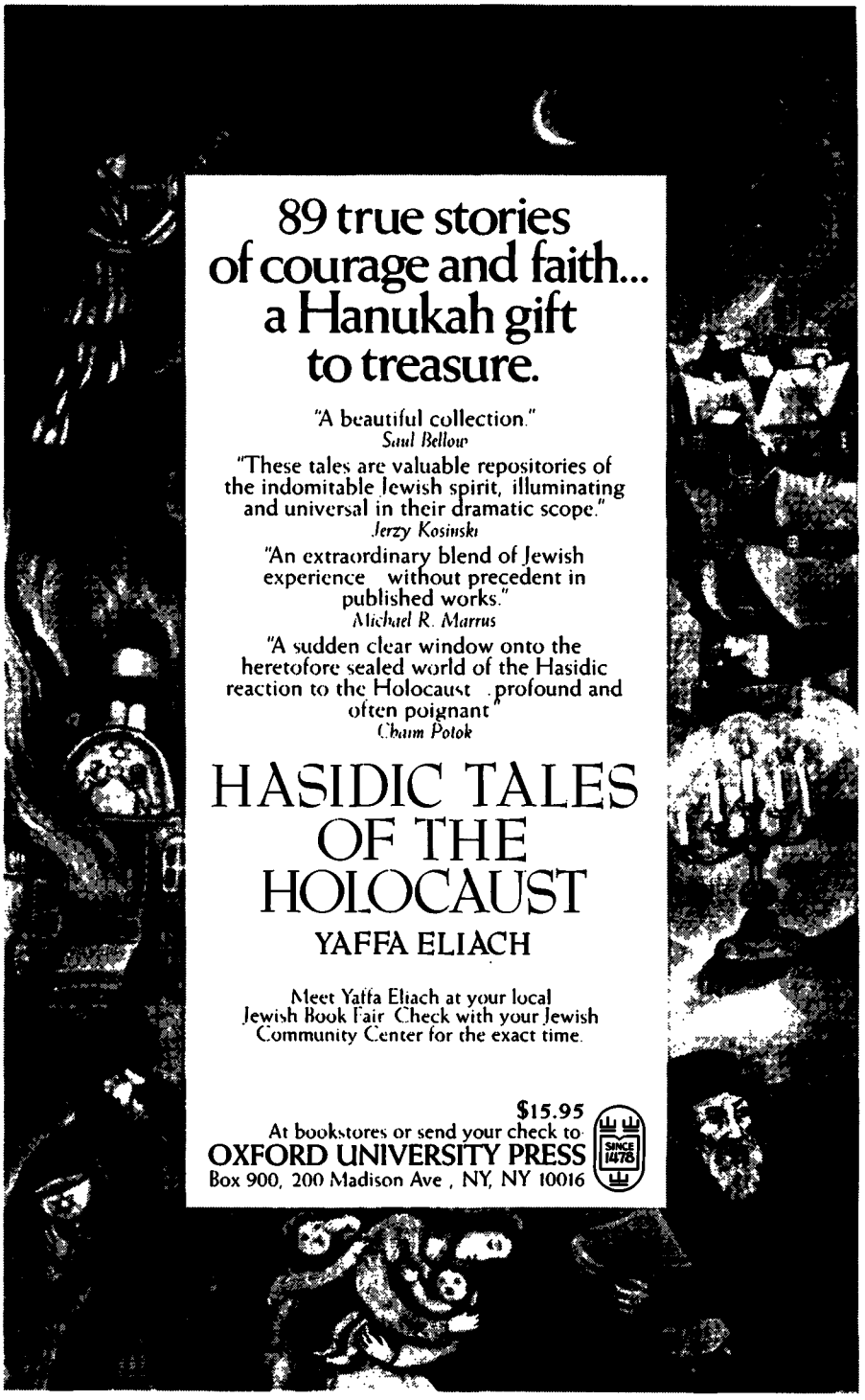
is not in his impulses but in his impulse-control mechanism." Under the new order, "instincts and feelings [and even behavior] are never condemned."

YET while Richard Herrin clearly benefited from the new dispensation as well as from the old, another actor in the "tragedy" Herrin perpetrated has not been so lucky. Paul Garland, Bonnie's father, who objected vehemently to Herrin's treatment by both church and state, seems to have been capable of arousing neither love and forgiveness nor understanding. Parental grief and rage, it seems, receive no blessing from either the servants of Christ or the disciples of Freud. Brother Robert, one of Richard's Albany friends, felt that Mr. Garland had carried things too far: "Oh," he told Dr. Gaylin, "I think you are [entitled to a certain amount of bitterness], but I do think that time should heal!" A Yale faculty member, the parent of daughters, observed that "Quite obviously the way [Mr. Garland] behaved once the terrible shock of the thing should have passed was irrational." Another felt the murdered girl's father spent too much time "moaning about something that cannot return."

Even Dr. Gaylin finds Paul Garland a bit hard to take. He has nothing but praise for the character of Sister Ramona and Brother Thomas, and he even considers Richard Herrin sympathetic to a certain degree, but the Garlands are simply "not easy people to relate to. . . . Suspicious, angry, resentful, conspiratorial in their view of the world . . . they invite rejection and they get it." Paul Garland in particular is "corseted and constrained by a personality that demanded self-control."

No purpose, clearly, would have been served by a false profession of fondness for the Garlands on the part of Dr. Gaylin (though one might have wished for some stronger acknowledgment that they have profound reasons for being "suspicious, angry, resentful"). But what, one may ask, is the relevance of the personality of anyone connected with this case, save that of the murderer? Does it matter in the least whether Sister Ramona is a woman of "energy, warmth, and vitality" or a cold-hearted ideologue; whether Brother Thomas is "the mildest, gentlest of men, with otherworldly qualities" or a conduit of dreary pieties; whether Paul Garland is unlikable or a man suffering the greatest torment of grief imaginable? The only question of importance is what their views are, and where these views lead.

Dr. Gaylin begs this question. To be sure, he asserts that an ordered society cannot live by the precepts of the Church as propounded by Sister Ramona (he leaves aside the staggering question of whether these are indeed the precepts of the Church), or by the credo of thera-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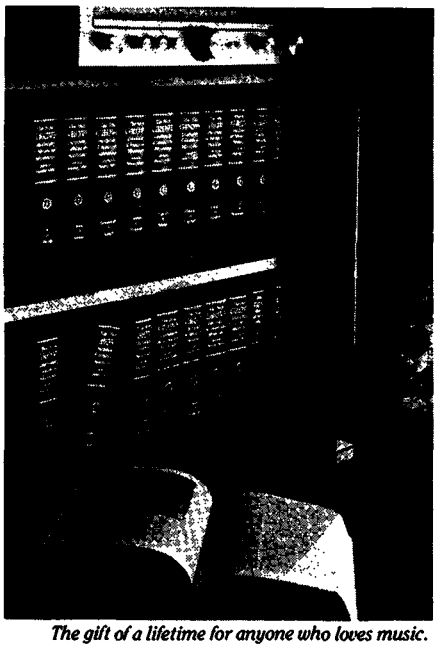

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peutic understanding. He maintains that society cannot afford to forgive all wrongdoing or to regard it merely as illness. But since he declines to invest any of the arguments he cites—even his own—with greater moral weight than any other, the issue appears to boil down essentially to one of order and safety, not justice.

Yet in the end there is no argument against the brand of Christian forgiveness preached by Richard Herrin's friends except the belief that some acts do not deserve forgiveness, and no argument against Freudian "understanding" except the idea that some acts are simply forbidden. These beliefs Dr. Gaylin cannot bring himself to embrace, and so his book in the end becomes only a more sophisticated symptom of the moral relativism it appears briefly to deplore.

An Educational Tale

MANAGERS OF VIRTUE: PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA, 1820-1980. By DAVID TYACK and ELISABETH HANSOT. *Basic Books. 312 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID L. KIRP

BOOKS whose nominal subject is the history of schooling in America have often been thinly disguised didactics, with less to say about past circumstances than about present-day controversies. This was true eighty years ago when Ellwood Cubberley, newly arrived at Stanford University from the superintendency of San Diego's schools, was told that he had three years to make the study of education respectable.

Cubberley deployed the past as a weapon in this campaign for respectability. His version of the growth of American public schools, like that of many of his contemporaries, was Whig history, a tale of uninterrupted past successes culminating in a splendid present, the outlines of a still more luminous future visible on the horizon. This Progressive-era recounting was tailor-made for the needs of a society that sought an efficient and well-managed educational enterprise, guided by the tenets of science, to serve the demands of a burgeoning and industrializing economy. Cubberley's message was plain: the fate of the young rested reassuringly in the hands of competent professionals.

The tone of education history was very different during the 1960's and 1970's as revisionist historians read America's troubled present back into the past. To them, the Vietnam adventure spoke to the perils of patriotism, among other things. Racial and ethnic tensions confirmed the problematic nature of America's commitment to the needs of the have-nots. The claims of professionals, in schools as in other parts of the society, were scarcely less fraudulent than those of the Wizard of Oz.

These themes soon dominated the revisionists' portrayals of earlier epochs as well. No longer were schools seen as sources of enlightenment for their students and prosperity for the nation, but instead were assailed as class- and culture-bound institutions. Public schooling, the critique went, induced a jingoist brand of patriotism and a capacity to endure a lifetime of work at alienating jobs, acquired through patient acquiescence in numbing classroom routine. The educational leaders who had assumed such heroic stature in the writings of Cubberley and his contemporaries were scorned as men of small minds and mean ambition, driven to enlarge their power by turning school systems into bureaucratic behemoths.

There have been exceptions, of course, histories more attentive to nuance and complexity, more resistant to easy pieties: Lawrence Cremin's wide-ranging *The Transformation of the School*, Bernard Bailyn's brilliant exploratory essay, *Education in the Forming of American Society*, Michael Katz's finely detailed *The Irony of Early School Reform*, and David Tyack's earlier study of urban education, *The*

DAVID L. KIRP, *professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley, writes frequently about issues of educational policy. His most recent book is* Just Schools: The Idea of Racial Equality in American Education.

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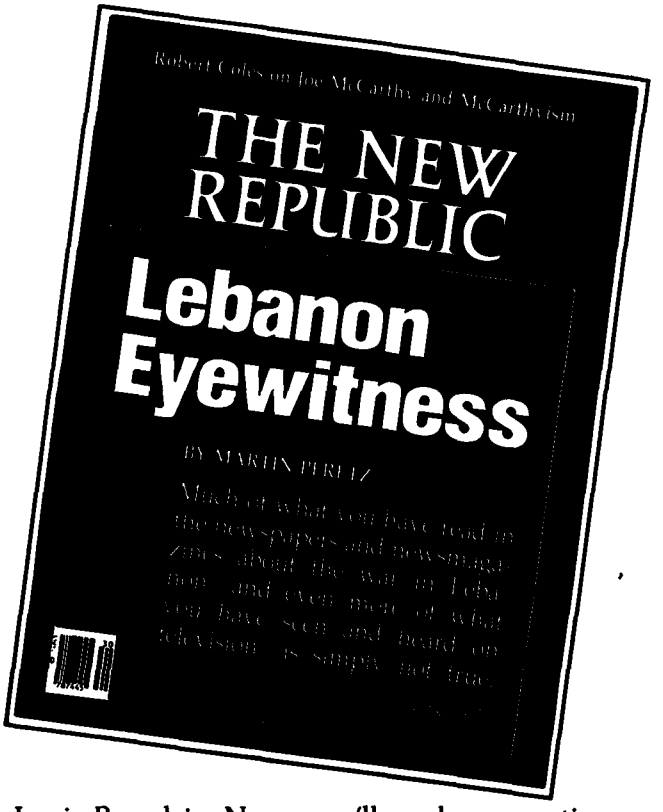

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One Best System, among them. Yet writing about the past has too often been turned into an opportunity to flay or celebrate the system of public education, not to understand its development.

Managers of Virtue offers us the past in something closer to its own terms. David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot inquire into the nature of leadership in education, describing the styles and analyzing the aims of those who have headed the schools, from the early 19th-century promoters of the common school to present-day urban superintendents. The matter of leadership is an important one, especially now when the best answer to the question of "Who's running the schools?" seems sometimes to be "no one," and when finger-pointing has replaced initiative in many quarters. But these contemporary concerns do not overpower the book. There are lessons here for the most pragmatic school official to absorb, but the historical presentation emphasizes themes that have been the central preoccupation of earlier times.

The merit of *Managers of Virtue* is that it tells a familiar story from a new perspective. The period of the common-school movement has traditionally been analyzed either as a triumph of educational enlightenment over know-nothingism, or, very differently, as the first step in the growing dominance of middle-class and nationalist interests over the poor and over cultural dissidents. Although Tyack and Hansot do not wholly reject either contention, they convincingly argue that the rhetoric of 19th-century educational reform, predominantly religious in tone and millennial in aspiration, deserves to be taken seriously in its own terms. That language was neither merely the precursor of scientism nor a mask for corporate capitalism, but a mode of discourse which set the tone and primed the passions of a genuine social movement.

AMERICAN public schools have been around for so long that one imagines they were always there, as if the little red schoolhouse were as enduring as Plymouth Rock. Throughout the first half of the 19th century, however, schooling looked very different. Private academies and religious schools vigorously sought attention and tax support; urban free schools, with their reputation as the pauper's preserve, were scorned. Modern historians interested in the experience of industrialized states have described the success of the common-school movement as a victory of bureaucracy over democratic localism. This is a useful approach if one aims at comprehending the origins of big-city public school systems. Yet common schools of the 19th century were mostly rural, locally controlled and unbureaucratic places, where the superintendent was also responsible for teaching—and for winding the clocks. They sprang up throughout the country, in the South some years later than elsewhere, because of the remarkable efforts of a band of enthusiasts who successfully applied to education the same talent for moral suasion that made this a nation of churches.

These secular missionaries shared a belief in the divine mission of America and a faith in the capacity of education to lead the nation into the promised land. "Educate the rising generation mentally, morally, physically, just as it should be done, and this nation and the world would reach the millennium within one hundred years," Senator Henry Blair intoned. Common schools would unite the country by stressing those civic and moral values that distinguished America. "Assure the gradual progress of solid and enlightened education," one contemporary broadside asserted, "and take no other heed for the morality of the people."

CHARISMA, not big government, gave the movement its impetus. Horace Mann, perhaps the most famous promoter of the common school, had to depend on his powers of persuasion. As Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, he had only modest formal authority and no staff. In 1842 Henry Barnard, Mann's counterpart in New York, traveled to almost every state in the union to spread the word. Local supporters organized revival meetings. Teachers' institutes were

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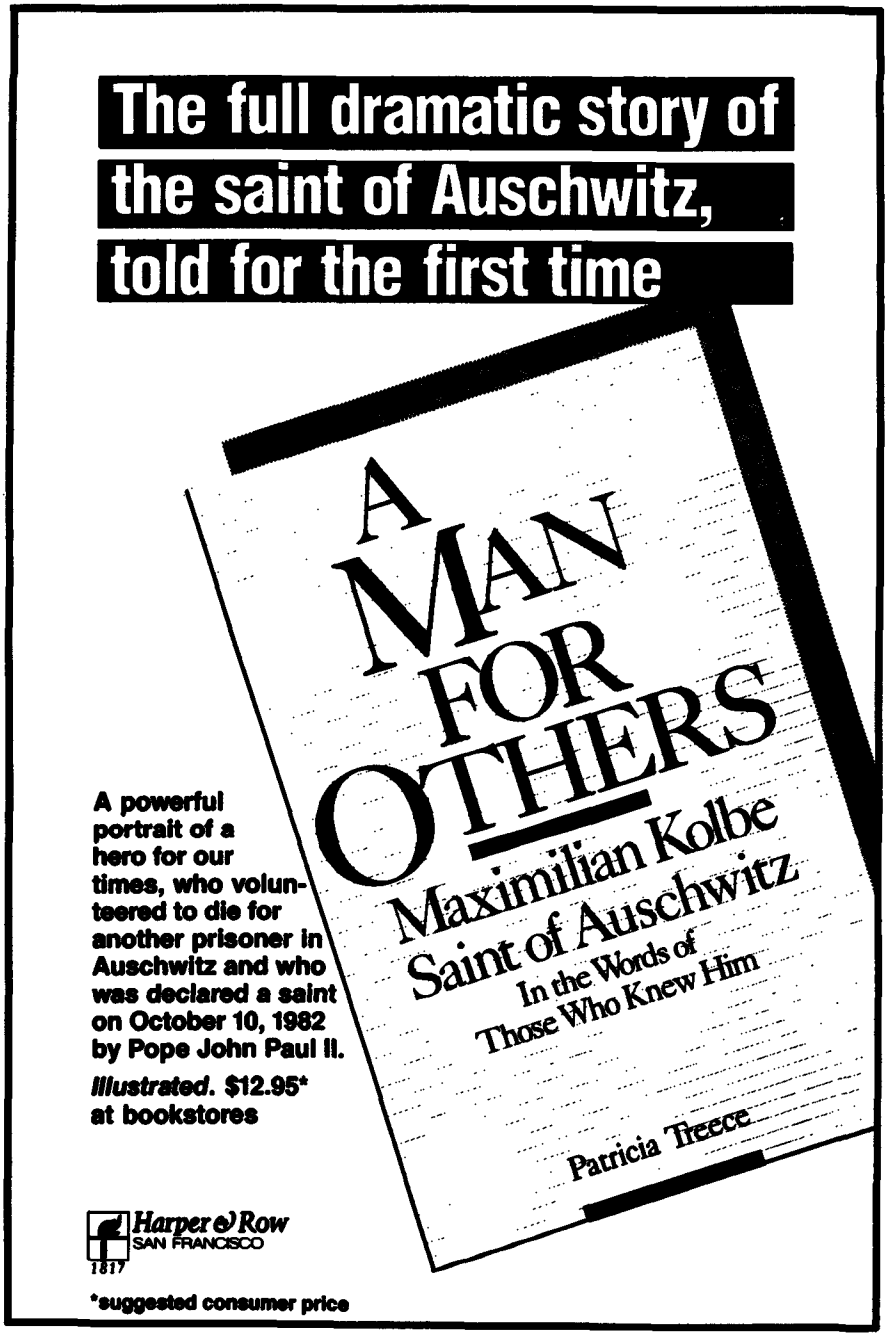
designed to turn the doyens of the classroom into a moral force inspired by a mission. Popular journals like the *Free School Clarion* or the *Illinois Common School Advocate* single-mindedly promoted the cause.

The message was potent. "The free school supported by all the people was carried before the people as the Ark of the Covenant." Testimony by a participant at a revival-style meeting led by Jabez Lamar Munroe Curry speaks tellingly of his influence:

> Curry . . . pleaded with passion and power for the children of the community. I remember how he seized a little child impulsively, and with dramatic instinct placed his hand on his curly head, and pictured to the touched and silent throng the meaning of a little child to human society. It was the first time I had ever heard a man of such power spend himself so passionately in such a cause. . . . It seemed to me, and to all the young men who heard him, that here was a vital thing to work for, here indeed a cause to which a man might nobly attach himself, feeling such that, though he himself might fail, the cause would go marching grandly on.

Millennial pieties were not, of course, the only arguments propounded, for the common-school advocates were also adept politicians who varied their message to suit the inclination of their audience. To those made fearful by swarms of ignorant immigrants, they offered the common school as an instrument of assimilation—even as powerful and unassimilated groups of immigrants, Belgians and Germans who settled in the Midwest, were permitted to run public schools where English was taught only as a foreign language. Conservatives were assured that public schools would stand as a last defense against the disorderly mob. The pocketbook conscious were told that education would bolster the economy by creating a more productive work force, thus proving (to use 20th-century language) a splendid human capital investment. Public education, Horace Mann proclaimed, was at once the "great equalizer" of individual circumstances, the "balance wheel of the social machinery," and the "creator of wealth undreamed of" for the nation.

THE sense of education's providential purpose did not vanish with the advent of the Progressive era; it had been mother's milk to early 20th-century school administrators, most of whom grew up in small-town strait-laced America. Yet the aspirations of these educators were regularly expressed in other terms. Schools would be efficient places—the idea of efficiency being loosely adapted from the factory and the office—and they would promote the "science" of education. If during the 19th century the coin of the educational realm was character,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the dominant motif subsequently became expertise. Common-school advocates had been reformers by nature, and education was but one of the causes they promoted. Their successors saw the profession of education as a lifelong calling.

The demands of leadership during the Progressive period were also new. Whereas Mann and his contemporaries had devoted their energies to proselytizing, the mission of the new elite was to establish the authority of their nascent profession. The "educational trust," as it was called, joined university professors with superintendents of big-city school systems and foundation heads in a common campaign to define good education. That network propounded the new orthodoxy through professional groups and scholarly journals. Promising young administrators were placed in small school districts, their actions watched and their careers nurtured by the godfathers who ran university training programs. From Boston to Boise, school surveys were conducted to standardize the practice of education. The outside experts who ran the surveys measured local practices against a national yardstick. They chided the pinchpenny—the citizens of Greenwich, Connecticut were mortified to discover that the second richest community of America was above average only in the number of vermin found in its schools—while encouraging those who spent more and adopted then-fashionable nostrums.

The leadership believed in itself, describing its mission in a language that was by turns scientific and pietistic. As late as 1952, the school administrators' yearbook intoned: "It is the superintendent of great heart and courageous spirit, possessed of sound judgment and deep understanding who will carry the profession and the schools forward. . . . His world will be immeasurably enriched by his service and leadership." Substitute "clergyman" and "church" for "superintendent" and "schools," and the passage retains its core meaning.

How outmoded, how quaint even, such language sounds today, when educational leaders are more harried than haloed. The decline in the authority of school chiefs during the past quarter century is hardly new, and neither is the mounting disbelief in the claims made for education in a riven society. That may be why the last section of *Managers of Virtue* has the least to teach us—although the recounting is certainly thorough. The civil-rights movement and the campaigns on behalf of the handicapped, non-English speakers, and women; the emergence of teacher-union militants who challenged the "educational trust" from within; the assertions of authority by Washington bureaucrats and federal judges; the decline in school achievement-test scores and the widely voiced (if demonstrably incorrect) contention that schooling does not matter: all these and more make an appearance, like bit players in a sprawling drama. But the treatment is necessarily cursory in a book of this sweep, the conclusions familiar. What is missing is the purchase that historical perspective allows and that animates the earlier discussions.

COMPARED with much current historical writing, *Managers of Virtue* has a certain old-fashioned quality to it. The text is dotted with carefully honed biographical sketches of figures ordinary and extraordinary, a device that Ellwood Cubberley himself might have used, if for a more transparently hortatory purpose. In its broad scope too the book recalls an earlier time, marking a departure from the specialized monograph, the close study of a single school system. Yet the work is thoroughly contemporary. It borrows from social science in framing the discussion of the movements that promoted common schools as well as the analysis of how elite networks acquired their clout. Unlike earlier paeans, this recounting attends to the dissidents as well as the upholders of orthodoxy: to the struggle of the "Lady Pilgrims," as the National Educational Association once described women educators, and to the plight of black and poor children, about which the Progressive experts had little to say. In thus recounting a history that is at once thrilling and deeply flawed, *Managers of Virtue* rings true.

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The 50's

WHEN THE GOING WAS GOOD! By JEFFREY HART. *Crown. 320 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by RONALD BERMAN

ONE of the problems for the conservative imagination in this country is that it has had no recent experience in power. Liberals have been able to look back on a culture they first changed and then dominated: from the successful attack on the old moral order in the 20's, to the radicalization of the intellectuals in the 30's, to the triumph of most of the good causes after that. Conservatives, when they had a good society in mind, have had to think of the Founding Fathers.

Jeffrey Hart is not the first to revalue the 50's, which he sees as much more than an interlude between World War II and the Great Society. Theodore H. White's *In Search of History*—like this book a combination of essay and biography—argued that the 50's created the modern middle class. Before then, the country was stratified in an almost European way, with most of the people at the bottom of the pyramid. Afterward, everyone made a lot more money; went to college in large and increasing numbers; and consumed goods and services in freight-car lots. The big events, for White, were economic and social change, the epiphenomenon was television.

Jeffrey Hart's book has something important to add: the 50's had a culture that mattered. His first theme is that the 50's had a more lively and interesting general culture than, say, the 30's. That is not exactly an innocent statement, Hart being concerned to demonstrate that mass middle-class culture was richer, more energetic, and more entertaining than the political moralizing it replaced. The second theme is that the 50's were transformational, their politics and culture carrying us through the astonishing changes of the war years in not only an orderly but a profoundly interesting way.

Like White, Hart has been helped by his own involvement with the times: he came of age intellectually in the 50's, absorbed its books, music, and television, and gathered his opinions. In the following decade he was at two different strategic locations: the department of English at Columbia and Republican campaign headquarters as a speechwriter for Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon. He now teaches at Dartmouth, and is a senior editor at *National Review*.

When the Going Was Good! lists a tremendous amount of what was written, played, or watched during the 50's. It is a find simply as a catalogue of musicals, novels, movies, and television. It reminds us of the thick texture of cultural life then: of *Invisible Man* and *Pal Joey* and "I Like Ike" and Ed Sullivan and Dylan Thomas and *Lolita* and Grace Kelly and Richard Rodgers and the author of the best-known speech of the decade, Richard Nixon. It reminds us that T.S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner and Lionel Trilling and F.R. Leavis were conducting their respective sections of the orchestra. It asserts, often persuasively, that in Hollywood, New York, and Washington, people were a larger size than they are now.

Hart also argues that something began to happen in the 50's: liberalism began to weaken. The Left in this period had less to say to the new majority created by the war—in fact, it had to contend with the damaging revelations of Igor Gouzenko and Whittaker Chambers, with the cases of Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs. It was from now on to be on the defensive. This comes out not only in the political analysis of Hart's book but, perhaps even more usefully, in his coverage of literature and criticism. In the 50's, after all, people still listened to literary critics. Thus a good deal emerges from Hart's consideration of one of the great books of that or any other decade, Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*. This book is in fact central to Hart's belief that liberalism declined in a decade which was

RONALD BERMAN *teaches literature at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of* America In the 60's, *among other works, and was Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1971 to 1977.*

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attracted to newer—and sometimes to older—ideas. To begin with, Hart is intensely concerned with what he describes as the dilemma of Lionel Trilling or, really, of any "progressive" intellectual: the fact that their social ideas were confronted by adversary texts. Since many of them were teachers, they had a considerable problem in handling the evidently retrograde Yeats, Pound, and Faulkner. Liberalism was all reason and optimism—qualities not present in either comedy or tragedy. But, as Hart states the matter:

> It was in literature that one could find the required sense of complexity, an expression of the full range of human possibility and human limitation, and a sense of style, intellectual energy, and refinement of thought and perception—everything, in short, that Trilling found lacking in the liberalism of 1950. But the literature he invoked was not that of the standard liberal authors. He went to James, Proust, Wordsworth, the Mark Twain of *Huckleberry Finn*, Tacitus, and Freud. These were the sources of power; these were the truths and the minds that might resuscitate liberalism if anything could.

Hart does not think, however, that liberalism could have been saved, or that Trilling could maneuver himself out of his dilemma. Sandburg, Steinbeck, and MacLeish could not be mentioned in the same breath with Yeats, Eliot, or Faulkner. Their ideas may have been fine, but they did not make first-rate literature.

It might be added that some liberal ideas, at least according to Trilling, were not fine. In 1948 he wrote a powerful and corrosive essay that ought to be mentioned in any cultural history, "The State of Our Culture: Expostulation and Reply." In this essay Trilling tells us something that is not in *The Liberal Imagination*:

> Stalinism becomes endemic in the American middle class as soon as that class begins to think; it is a cultural Stalinism, independent of any political belief: the cultural ideas of the ADA will not, I venture to say, be found materially different from those of the PAC.

The PAC stands for the Stalinist Political Action Committee of the CIO. Maybe Trilling's dilemma was even deeper than Hart states.

THE 50's may have been neo-Victorian, but, we may recall, a lot of strange things happened a hundred years before them too. (I cannot think of more modern—even of more sexually interesting—novels than *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield*.) In this connection Hart has a really good eye for what is complex and outside the boundaries of theory. One of the most helpful things in the book is the attention he pays to men: there are very good critical-biographical accounts of Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Richard Nixon, and Jack Kerouac. And then there is the attention he pays to women. Not only to Marilyn Monroe, Grace Kelly, and Brigitte Bardot, but to the women of the emerging new class:

> The real basis of the racial and sexual changes that are customarily associated with the 1960's seems to have been prepared during the war years of the 1940's. World War II had a tremendous impact on the American domestic scene, introducing social and moral changes to a greater extent than any event since the Civil War. Hundreds of thousands of women went to work in the defense plants—Rosie the Riveter—or served in the women's branches of the armed services, the WACs and the WAVES. For the first time since the 1920's we witnessed a widespread and aggressive assertion of female sexuality, an assertion, indeed, far more widespread than anything in the 20's.

The 50's may have been stable, but they were not passive. As in the Victorian period, there were some deep undercurrents, and sexuality was symbolically present in new ways. This was, after all, the decade of Sinatra and Presley. In fact, Hart dates the sexual revolution not from the publication of *The Kinsey Report* but from the disappearance of one of the century's hoariest conventions: the misty dissolve on screen as actor and actress consummate. No more fireworks or waves or trains roaring into tunnels.

Some undercurrents were political. Before 1950, there were real boundaries between the races, sexes, and classes. After 1960 something had clearly happened to these boundaries. Hart does not see any particular effect of the Great Society or of the extended Happy Hour that followed. He thinks it was the transformation of the 50's that paved the way for the various forms of new equality. He observes that Nixon's 1968 campaign headquarters was full of ambitious young Jews and Catholics whose fathers would assuredly have voted for Roosevelt. They were there because of accumulated change. He reminds us that Nixon's first campaign was run with Henry Cabot Lodge, but that his second included a man whose name had been changed from something unpronounceable to Spiro Agnew. Three hundred years were dropped in one election. In short, the *60's* were a decade of some revolution but a great deal of contingency.

THERE are problems with this book, which is broken up into encapsulations, interchapters, biographies, reminiscences. Some of its materials were previously published as separate pieces and have not been fully woven in. Some of the judgments are either wrong or at odds with mine; I don't like *The Catcher in the Rye* or *The Old Man and the Sea* and I think that Hart overrates them (but perhaps he is thinking not of their value but of their influence). There is too much baseball, which is not that serious a subject and has been better dealt with elsewhere. But so far no one has covered the 50's better. This is a book that has information and ideas that will be new to most readers, and it is also true, at least as seen by a member of the class of '52.

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"In other parts of the country with different geology we might use water, steam, or chemicals to get the oil flowing."

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